



**Eric
Culbreath**
Navy

Eric Culbreath

Apr 23, 1922 - Apr 23, 2012

BIRTHPLACE: Tampa, FL

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: SM1/c

DIVISION: Navy

THEATER OF OPERATION: American

SERVED: Oct 6, 1942 - Nov 11, 1945

**HONORED BY: Wife, Betty; Brother Joe Culbreath;
and children, Jim, Rick, LeeAnn, Denise, Charise**

BIOGRAPHY

These are excerpts taken from SM1/c Culbreath's diary while serving aboard various LSTs and locations during his enlistment with the US Navy: October 16, 1943: Arrived at harbor of Naples. Tied up along side of the passenger ship terminal which was Mussolini's pride and joy, but now in ruins. US military dragging the waters along the Pier bringing up weapons which the Germans had thrown in as they retreated. June 5, 1944: Underway to France from Weymouth in convoy. Expected enemy action. None encountered. June 6, 1944: D-Day. Ships and landing crafts of every type motionless on every side. We were stopped. Over shore could be seen a curtain of flares and the occasional burst of gunfire. Fires were burning along the hill. Peculiar fireworks over beach. Seemed to be raining red, white and blue bits of fire. Kept waiting for word of landing of troops. No sign of enemy aircraft. Dawn came and at 0630 word came of landing of first wave. Saw LCT 85 in sinking condition. Later received word of second landing. Enemy firing on beach all day. LCI on beach hit. Warships shelling all the time. Found bodies in water. Several sticks of bombs dropped on beach. June 8, 1944: Small enemy air attacks all over anchorage at nightfall. Broached and cropped LCTs, LCIs, LSTs and small craft can be seen high and dry on the beach. Allied planes overhead all day. Unloading went very well. Occasional shelling by warships. June 9, 1944: Pretty hot. Enemy air attack on anchorage at nightfall. Think they hit one or two ships. Some claim 3 or 4 planes went down. Secured about 0100. No further action. Slept the best I have in some time. Report Germans using gas at front lines. June 10, 1944: About 0115, German planes returned. Nothing dropped nor was there any strafing. We wasted a lot of ammo. Just before dawn sound of aircraft overhead kept us on alert. Word came that plane was friendly to cease firing. Almost immediately afterward saw plane go down in flames over horizon. Afraid it was one of ours shot down by enemy aircraft fire. Around 0700 formation of B-26s flew over. Reports of women snipers coming in. Nothing more so far concerning gas. Planes landing on air strip on hill behind beach. Saw DUKW hit mine on beach. Also saw lines of prisoners coming down to

beach approximately 200-300. Beach really cluttered by disabled landing craft. One LCT completely upside down and another buckled a mid ship. LCTs still on beach high and dry. Saw LT Bob Smith. Glad he survived so far.