

'What a Difference 70 Years Makes'

Earlier this month I was in Normandy, France, for the 70th anniversary of D-Day, the Allied Forces' invasion of the continent of Europe to liberate France and other countries from German occupation.

In Sainte-Mere Eglise, the first town to be liberated, there were thousands of people dancing in the streets, a parade of antique World War II Jeeps, army trucks, artillery, weapons and war equipment.

There were hundreds of mock "soldiers" dressed in full combat costume and gentlemen and ladies dressed in vintage clothing, looking like ghosts from June 6, 1944, when 14,000 paratroopers from 843 planes descended upon the town and throughout the region in the early morning hours before daylight.

I also met a legitimate special forces unit of Green Beret soldiers, and later in the week, a four-star general made an appearance with a full entourage.

I saw the church where one paratrooper's chute, John Steele, was caught on the steeple, and he hung over the doors of the church for hours before being captured by the Germans. It was a miracle that he wasn't shot and killed. He was only shot in the foot, as made famous by the actor Red Buttons in the movie *The Longest Day*.

I interviewed a man named Nellis Ver Hey, 92, from Texas, who landed outside of town in the swamps, and almost drowned before he could gather himself and follow his orders to "attack."

I also met Bill Caldwell, 86, from Denver, who also jumped

that day; he was only 16. On the second day, he said he killed his first German. He was with his best buddy, also 16, who was shot and killed. I asked Mr. Caldwell where his buddy was when he got shot, and he said, "right next to me."

Finally, I told Mr. Caldwell that I had a son, John, that would be 16 on Sept. 1 this year, and did he have any advice for him. "Yes," he said, "stay in school." I pressed him for what else he would tell John, and he said, "Tell him to love his country, support his country."

What a difference 70 years makes.

Ben Ferrell *is the owner and CEO of BMC Ferrell, which represents Kenneth Hagin Ministries, Hillsong Church and others.*