

## Reenacting Anvil

by Blaise Goodwin, Washington State

“What is that?” asked Tay, the clan’s bully-want-to-be. Taylor ‘Tay’ Bluefield, bullheaded and outspoken, wouldn’t hurt a fly or another human being, unless they tried to hurt Miles. Tay and three of his friends circled the half-filled kiddie pool, looking puzzled what was suspended there.

Miles replied, “It’s a trifold foamboard of the state of Texas, mounted to a 2’ by 6’ sheet of plywood, that extends over the left and right sides of the pool.” Miles Bailey is a smart kid who has enough intelligent to spare. He’s autistic and wears headphones to muffle louds sounds.

Miles struggled with social interaction and was homeschooled after being bullied. That changed after his best friend, Lloyd Duvall, moved-in next door. Miles returned to school part-time when he found out he could be in the same class.

The four excited 11-year-old boys had assembled in Lloyd’s well-used backyard. Lloyd, the clan’s outgoing leader, did not own an electronic devise for school or play. Instead, he organized weekend outdoor excursions. It helped that Lloyd owned nearly 200 pounds of Lego pieces.

Lloyd replied, “That’s correct Miles, but look at it as a battlefield for our Lego reenactment of Operation Dragoon.”

“What is Operation Dragoon and when did it happened in Texas?”, said Dozen. Dozen’s real name is Alex Hernandez, but he earned his nickname because of his tendency to ask a dozen questions every time he opened his mouth.

Miles quickly shared, “Operation Dragoon was, on all accounts, the greatest comprehensive allied attack during World War II, but it was not fought in Texas.”

“Wait, did he say, ‘Legos’?”, asked Dozen.

“Yes, I did Dozen, and right again Miles. Operation Dragoon occurred in southern France. This board is now a recycled school project. Texas is representative of the size of France. It is 1.2 times the size of France” explained Lloyd. Pointed to a place on the map, Lloyd continued, “This purple line is France’s border. Operation Overlord took place in north France. These yellow pushpins represent our allied troops. The red pushpins represent Nazi occupation. Operation Dragoon was fought in southern France, here. Texas has the Gulf of Mexico. France has the Gulf of Lion, where the allies’ initial assault took place.”

Dozen inquired, “Who were the allies?”

Miles contributed, “President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin met in Tehran in 1943. They agreed that Operation Overlord, known today as D-day, would be supported by Operation Anvil, which was later renamed, Operation Dragoon (Hickman, 2019).”

Tay frankly questioned the response, “Why not reenact the D-day landing? It was cool. No one knows about Operation Dragoon.”

“Spoken like Churchill himself”, said Lloyd.

Bothered, Tay asked, “What’s that supposed to mean?”

Lloyd continued, “Churchill opposed Operation Dragoon. He thought it was wiser to do something different, like send reinforcement to Italy or the Balkans (Hickman, 2019). On landing of D-day, 10,000 soldiers’ loss their lives; losses totaled 36,976 killed, and 209,672 wounded (Operation Overlord, 2014). Operation Dragoon deployed roughly 200,000 American and French

troops, who aggressively advanced 400 miles into France's interior within three weeks (Commission, 2014). The offense severely crippled Germany's stronghold and resulted in the withdrawal. The Franco-American armies suffered less a combined 10,000 casualties (Site, 2015)."

"How many Lego minifigs do we need?", said Dozen.

"All of them and use my sister's girl minifigs too. Approximately 350,000 women served in World War II (Martin , 2020). They weren't deployed in combat, but they filled essential roles."

Tay asked, "What about the brothers?"

Miles commented, "Representation of women and minorities in Operation Dragoon are not specifically recorded, but we do know they served in all military branches during World War II. Unfortunately, African American men and women experienced racism and segregation while serving our country; however, their superior contributions were recognized (Bamford, 2020)."

Tay replied, "I am proud to learn that people, who look like me, proved they were just as capable to serve and face the ugliness of that segregation nonsense. They need to teach more of that in schools, so we can learn that all people sacrificed their lives for Americans then and now."

Lloyd said, "Operation Dragoon teaches us that working together makes us stronger. Fortunately, we don't need a war to realize that."

The boys cheered and high-fived each other.

Tay said agreeingly, "Those men and women are real-life heroes who fought evil to liberate people that had rights just like we do. Let's reenact this battle to honor them for being

courageous and show our gratitude for the freedom we have. If the Nazis had won, we probably would not be here playing together.”

Lloyd continued explaining, “Operation Dragoon included six battleships, four aircraft carriers, 21 cruisers, 100 destroyers, and 500 transport ships equipped with troops, rockets, and armored tanks (Site, 2015). Operation Dragoon showed that advanced planning, preparation, and being well-supplied put the odds in their favor. They were well-informed risk takers.”

Dozen spoke up, “Makes me want to do my homework and study for tests in advance instead of waiting until the last minute.”

Lloyd added, “Operation Dragoon was a stellar attack with air, sea, and land raids.

Tay chimed in “Are you thinking, what I’m thinking?”

“What is he thinking?” asked Dozen.

Lloyd smiled and said, “Yes. We are going to use the drone to provide an air attack and drop paratroopers. You’ll want to build payloads that attach to the drone with the ability to drop Lego pieces on command.”

“No prob” Tay said gleefully.

“What do you want me to do?”, asked Miles.

“You will fill the Gulf of Lion with our fleet of all kinds of Lego boats at the Marseilles and Toulon ports” instructed Lloyd.

“How many pieces are we talking?” asked Miles.

“As many as you can put together. Let’s see how much we can get done in a few hours” replied  
Lloyd.

“Let’s do this!” they exclaimed.

## References

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