

17. FHA. THE AMERICAN SHELTER

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Remembering Falmouth's role in the preparation for D-Day on 6th June 1944 ...

As part of the plan for the joint Allied invasion of Normandy, Falmouth's strategic location, its dry docks and ship repair facilities meant it was chosen as a site for a US Navy Advanced Amphibious Base (US Navy AAB).

As a result, in the summer of 1943, a huge, tented camp was built on the fields around The Beacon to house over a thousand naval personnel.

The US Navy AAB's key role was to provide vital support for the troops crossing to Omaha Beach in Normandy.

One of their many varied tasks involved setting up embarkation points around the Fal (including one at Grove Place and another at Harvey's Yard in Falmouth) and constructing the 'hards' – flexible concrete matting designed to allow landing craft to be loaded with troops and heavy transport.

Following the end of the war in Europe, Cmdr. Lawrence W. Snell, US Navy Reserve Commanding Officer, presented this wooden shelter to the town of Falmouth on behalf of the Officers and Men of the US Naval AAB.

Eighty years on, our 'American Shelter' on the sea front is still in daily use and the plaque inside exists as a reminder of those pivotal times

Photographs: Brian Osborne, Images of the Past Collection.