

Private Vinton Dove



Private Dove at Fort Belvoir, 1943.

Private Vinton Dove entered the Army at Fort Myer, VA, in September 1943. Following bull dozer operator training, he was assigned to the 37th Engineer Battalion. On D-Day, Private Dove and his assistant operator, Private Shoemaker, were in a Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) heading for Omaha Beach. The LCM contained two jeeps in front of Dove and Shoemaker's bulldozer, and several squads of Infantry. As the LCM's ramp dropped, machinegun fire raked the LCM, killing the two jeep operators and most of the Infantry. Dove threw the dozer into gear and pushed the two jeeps ahead of it into the surf. Sixteen bulldozers were slated to land on Omaha Beach early on D-Day. Only six made it ashore, and three of those were destroyed by German mortars and artillery.

Sitting atop the dozer, Dove and Shoemaker were chest deep in seawater. After pulling several disabled vehicles out of the surf and removing many obstacles with the dozer, the two Engineers headed

for the beach. Rifle and machinegun fire was so intense that Dove operated the dozer lying nearly horizontal, while clearing mines and obstacles from the beach. Later that morning, an Infantryman requested Dove's assistance in taking out a German machinegun.

bunker. Infantrymen climbed on the supports behind the dozer blade, as Dove drove toward the bunker. The blade protected the men until they were able to throw grenades into the bunker and silence the machinegun. Dove's next task was to clear the narrow road designated Exit E-3. The road was blocked with cars, trucks, and even a cement mixer. Dove moved up the road pushing the obstacles over the road's edge. As Dove crested a hill, he spotted a German soldier, and dispatched the German with a single rifle shot.

Next, Dove had to clear a shingle and fill a tank trap to reach Exit E-1. The bulldozer slowly moved up a hill clearing E-1 of obstacles. At the crest of the hill, sniper fire caused Dove to dismount his dozer. Once the Infantry silenced the sniper, Dove cut a road inland through a field and hedgerows for over a mile. Despite being shot in the hand and having shrapnel in his face and lips, Dove continued to operate his dozer for over 48 hours. For his actions on June 6, 1944, Private Vinton Dove was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.



Corporal Vinton Dove wearing the Distinguished Service Cross he earned for his actions on D-day.