

Like sardines, we were packed on the decks of the boats; we sat, row upon row, silent and sombre in our metal cans. Each of us too lost in our own private thoughts and emotions to speak. I remember all too well the feeling of anxiety that cloaked us like a dark fog. We knew what was coming. We knew the horrors that awaited us on the beach. What we did not know was how long it would take. Who would survive? Who wouldn't?

War is an experience that never leaves you; it roots itself deep within and changes you, irreparably. Some might say the pride of patriotism made it worth while, yet others might argue that nothing is worth staring over the parapet of Hell. We had two options: face the job we went there to do, or run and find somewhere to hide – the latter just wasn't me. I'd come to do a job.

Just before we'd disembarked, there was a young soldier near the back who broke down. The poor boy crumbled and wept for his mother as the enormity of it all hit him like the anchor hit the seabed beneath the shallow water. It was a brutal, poignant blow.

"Now!" Piling off the decks onto the sand, we had no choice but to run forwards, towards the enemy lines, towards our target and very possibly towards our death...