



HUGH VAUGHAN-THOMAS



Hugh Vaughan-Thomas, the Swansea-born sportsman and Oxford graduate, played for the Welsh county during 1933 before joining the Royal Corps of Signals and serving during World War Two as a member of Earl Mountbatten's staff at Combined Operations, specializing in the development and operation of landing craft which were used on D-Day on 6 June 1944.

The safe and efficient operation of these troop-carrying craft, plus the effective landing of other vessels with equipment and vehicles, was an integral part of the success of Operation Overland. During 1943 and 1944 Hugh was part of the team developing the landing craft and other vessels which were being designed especially for Operation Overlord and other actions planned in the subsequently manoeuvres as part of the liberation of Europe.

As far as the Normandy beaches were concerned, the summer months of 1944 were the most favourable time, but only ten days each month were suitable for launching the operation with a day near the full Moon required both for illumination during the hours of darkness and helping to illuminate navigational landmarks for the crews of aircraft, gliders and landing craft. In addition, a day with a spring tide was required, in order to provide the deepest possible water to help safe navigation over the defensive obstacles which had been placed by the German forces on the seaward approaches to the Normandy beaches.

Hugh, who was the younger brother of the famous BBC radio and TV broadcaster Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, also helped to develop the armoured assault craft, known as Buffalo's, which were successfully used by Allied forces in the crossing of the Rhine. His efforts and expertise in developing these vessels subsequently led to the award of a military OBE in 1946.