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On Sunday, parachutists leapt from World War II-era C-47 planes over Normandy, France, to commence a week of ceremonies marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day. The skydivers' jump from the vintage aircraft was cheered by a crowd as their chutes opened against a backdrop of tunes from the 1940s by Glenn Miller and Edith Piaf.

The D-Day landings, on June 6, 1944, saw Allied soldiers from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and other nations storm five beaches in Normandy, a crucial event leading to the eventual defeat of Nazi Germany. This week’s events honor the dwindling number of veterans, now in their late nineties or older, who return to remember their comrades and celebrate their victory.

Several notable figures, including U.S. President Joe Biden, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and members of the British royal family, are expected to attend the commemorations.

Among the veterans present was Don Graves, a 98-year-old U.S. Marine Corps veteran of Iwo Jima, who emphasized the importance of remembering the sacrifices made. Ralph Goldsticker, a 98-year-old U.S. Air Force veteran, recalled his experiences during the landings, highlighting the significance of their mission. Both veterans, along with over 60 others, arrived in Paris on Saturday, facilitated by American Airlines.

The commemorative events also feature fireworks and planned solemn ceremonies to ensure that future generations understand the historical impact and cost of the conflict.