



Drawing D - Day

Ugo Giannini

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On June 6, 1944, Ugo Giannini landed on Omaha Beach at H+70 minutes as one of a platoon of military police assigned to the 29th Division. Ugo's team was to control the incoming traffic. There were thirty-seven men in his platoon; they were decimated in the first ten minutes. Six men got to the beach. Someone told Ugo that he was needed on the bluff above. He climbed the Vierville Draw, jumped into a crater made by naval bombardment, and spent that day and part of the next day as an eyewitness to the greatest invasion ever conceived by the military. Remarkably, he began to draw. These are the only drawings made that historic day, as well as the next. This book is the story of one man, in the context of World War II; a man who was a poet, an artist, and had the strength of a boxer. A civilian used to the comforts and hysteria of an immigrant Italian family, in love with his childhood sweetheart, plunged into the hell of war. Presented here are the sketches from that historic day and the days that immediately followed. Drawn in pencil and pen, in a gritty, realist style, the images show heavily burdened infantrymen trying to stay afloat in the seawater, crawling on the beach or dead among the ruins of a bombed-out village. Interwoven with letters home written by a young man to his family and his girlfriend, the words and images portray the horror of war in a deep and personal way. The abstract paintings that appear at the end of the book provide a powerful statement, composed years after the initial experience, about the complete disintegration, both physical and spiritual, caused by war.

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