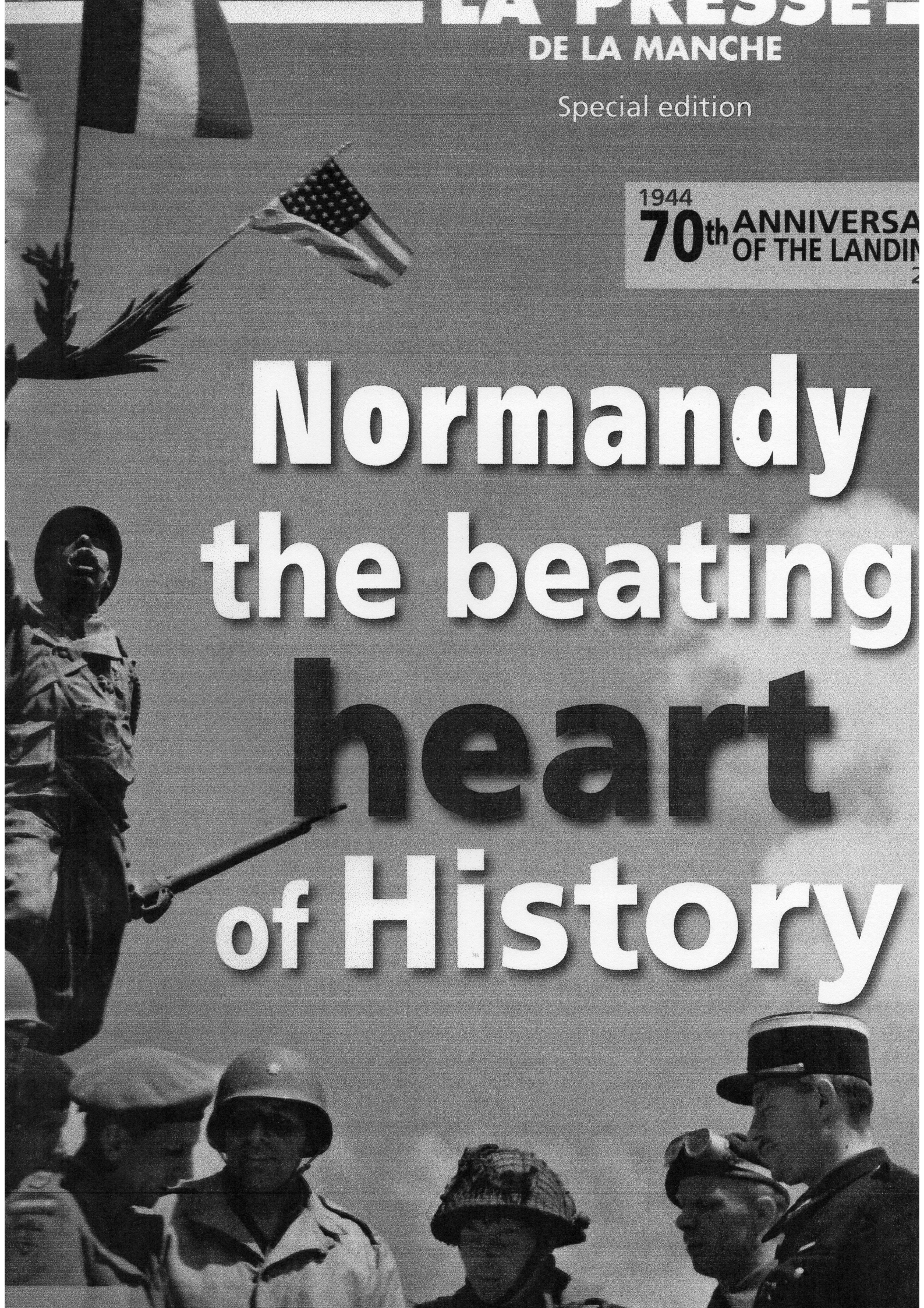


Special edition

1944

70th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE LANDING



Normandy the beating heart of History

THE FORGOTTEN HQ

Since 1982, Jean-Jacques and Annick Roucheray have been the happy owners of the Pont-Rilly château, in Négreville between Valognes and Bricquebec. When they arrived in the Cotentin, the château was derelict and due to be demolished. The Roucherays fell in love with it. They worked at giving it back the appearance it had in the 18th century.

It was a task that they have accomplished with great success. Ex painter and decorator, Jean-Jacques Roucheray is not only very talented but also has very fine taste and knows what he wants. For him and his wife, it was important to do a proper restoration job. In order to revive the soul of Pont-Rilly, the Roucherays looked for building techniques and materials used in the 18th century, consulting architecture books of that century, including the Diderot and D'Alembert *Encyclopaedia* that could help with information on such or such a forgotten technique.

The result is outstanding from the cellar to the attic, not forgetting the old stables, the mill and the chapels: everything has been restored to its original state and each room has been refurbished with furniture, rugs, china and objects of that era bought in antique shops or auctions.

When Jean Jacques Roucheray welcomes you in the courtyard of his castle which lays at the bottom of the valley, he is rather proud of the results of his work (and so he should be). He will tell you precisely how he proceeded, notably using the comprehensive archives which allowed him to learn and understand how the castle had been designed and built. **"One cubic metre of archives had been kept in perfect conditions"** he exclaimed **"this was an inexhaustible source of information for us"**.

In the shower...

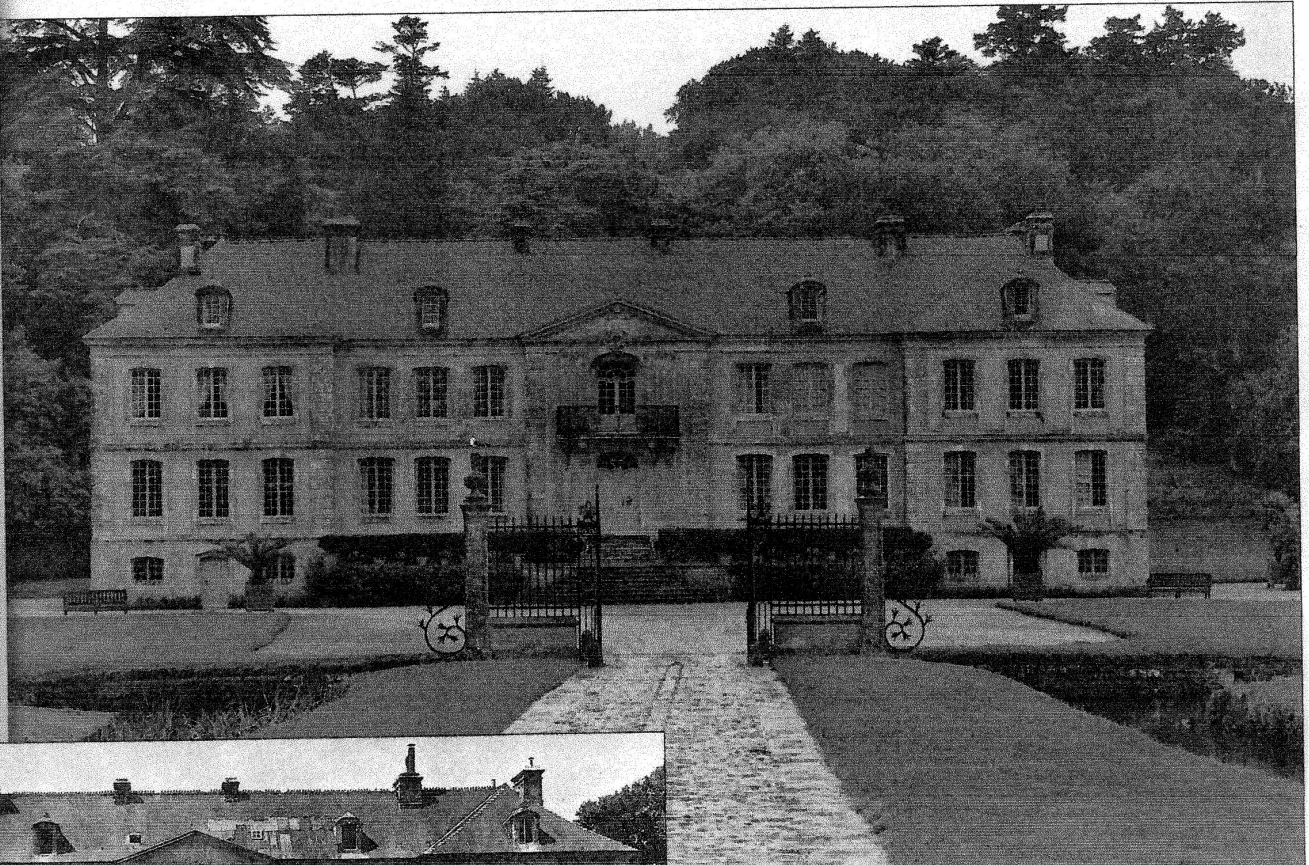
What about the ADSEC/COM Z in all this? **"The ADSEC**

what?" queried Jean-Jacques Roucheray who was flabbergasted when we told him that his castle had played a major role on D-Day when housing for a month the supply services HQ of the American army.

Of that episode, Jean-Jacques Roucheray knew nothing. All he knew was that during the occupation, German officers stayed at the castle, that during the combat leading to the liberation of the area, a shrapnel hit the place without too much damage, and that on each door of the castle, numbers were inscribed most probably dating from this time.

He also had seen a few photographs and a film in black and white in which he could see American soldiers standing at the windows and in the park of the castle. He also remembers that one day, a local inhabitant admitted that after the liberation, when he was teenager, he used to come and hide in the park to stare at the female American soldiers having their shower in a big tent, put up for that purpose at the back of the castle!

A few photographs, a film and an elderly gentleman with this vague memory of female bodies in the shower, this is all we have and it is very little. After one month at Pont-Rilly, the ADSEC/COM Z packed their bags and went to Paris nearer to the American troops. Pont-Rilly got back to its quiet life and with time, the American stay (admittedly very short and discreet) had been forgotten. This shows the ingratitude of History.



Laying at the bottom of the valley, the superb château of Pont-Rilly and had played an important role in the Battle of Normandy when housing for more than a month the supply services HQ of the American army.

Photo F. Patard/La Presse de la Manche.