



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on James Earl Rudder. Then, answer questions about it.

James Earl Rudder 1910–1970

The German army considered Pointe du Hoc a perfect spot for defending the coast of France from Allied forces during World War II. From atop its hundred-foot cliffs, German guns could reach both Omaha Beach and Utah Beach. The Germans thought their position was secure. And it was—until June 1944, when Texan James Earl Rudder and his Second Ranger Battalion began to climb those cliffs.

Rudder graduated from Texas A&M University in 1932 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Reserves. He taught high school and college and coached football until he was called to active duty in 1941. He trained U.S. Army Rangers for one of D-Day's most dangerous operations: taking Pointe du Hoc.

During the assault, over half of Rudder's men were killed or wounded, and Rudder himself was shot in the leg. But the high ground was seized, and the German guns were silenced.

After the war, Rudder continued to take on tough challenges. As president of Texas A&M University, he supported optional membership in the Corps of Cadets and helped open the university to women, despite great opposition.

When he died in 1970, Rudder was celebrated for his courageous leadership in both war and peace. An inscription on Rudder Tower, located on the A&M campus, remembers Rudder's "uncommon ability to inspire men and lead them to exceptional achievement."

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on James Earl Rudder. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What were the results of James Earl Rudder's actions on D-Day?
2. How did Rudder contribute to Texas A&M University after World War II?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Taking a Position.** Of the two major changes that Rudder made at Texas A&M, which do you think had a larger impact on the school? Explain.