Text adapted from: https://www.history.co.uk/article/the-bagpiper-of-d-day

Use the words in brackets to form a word that fits in the space. The exercise begins with an example (0)

THE BAGPIPER OF D-DAY

In the early hours of Tuesday, 6 June 1944, the 0) largest (large) seaborne invasion in the history of warfare began. The noise of war reverberated along 50 miles of the Normandy coast. Whilst the crackle of gunfire and rumble of 1)_____(explode) filled the ears of those landing on French soil that day, those on Sword beach heard another noise, one that would lift their spirits in their most 2)_____(fear) hour. It was the sound of bagpipes.

Around 08:20, 21-year-old Private Bill Millin of the 1st Special Service Brigade Commandos stepped off his landing craft and into the icy waters of the English Chanel. The man next to him was shot in the face and killed 3)_____(instant), his body dropping into the sea and sinking below. Dressed in his father's World War I kilt and armed only with a ceremonial dagger, Millin began wading through the waist-deep water towards the shore. As he did, he started playing Hielan' Laddie on his bagpipes, the 4)_____(dead) performance of his life had begun.

During training, Millin was appointed the personal piper to the eccentric but brilliant military commander Brigadier Simon Fraser, the heredity chief of the Clan Fraser and the 15th Lord Lovat. The then 32-year-old Lovat asked Millin to play the pipes as they stormed the beaches on D-Day. This was against army 5)_____(regulate), as pipers had been banned from the front line during WWII, due to the high number of casualties during WWI. In the Great War, pipers had been seen as easy targets and were slaughtered in their droves.

When Millin reminded Lord Lovat of the rules, Lovat replied, 'Ah, but that's the English War Office. You and I are both Scottish, and that doesn't apply.' And so Millin knew he had a job to do.

Millin initially began playing as the Allied boats sailed up the River Hamble towards The Solent. The music was relayed over a loudhailer so troops on other transports could hear it. Former Commando Roy Cadman described the scene, 'As we pulled out with Bill Millin playing his bagpipes, all the boats started tooting their hoots and all the men on the decks were cheering. It reminded us of footballers playing for England against Germany, coming out of the tunnel onto the pitch, where all the crowd all cheered as they came out. ' Many more would be moved by Millin's music. One of his fellow Commandos, Tom Duncan, would later state in an interview what the sound of those pipes meant to him on the beaches. 'I shall never forget hearing the skirl of Bill Millin's pipes. It gave us a great lift and increased our determination. As well as the 6)_____(proud) we felt, it reminded us of home, and why we were fighting there for our lives and those of our loved ones.'

For Millin, the pipes gave him something to focus on, to distract him from the horrors around, as well as providing relief after suffering terrible 7)_____(seasick) on the crossing over.

After the beach 8)_____(land) the Commandos advanced inland and towards Pont de Bénouville, a bridge that crossed the Caen Canal that would later be 9)_____(name) Pegasus Bridge after the emblem of the British airborne forces.

On the road to the bridge, Millin continued to play before the Commandos came under 10)_____(snipe) fire. Lovat shot and killed the sharpshooter before turning to Millin and saying, 'Right, piper, start the pipes again.' Millin did and the men continued on towards Pegasus Bridge. Later that day the men took over some nearby farmhouses just outside a German-occupied village, which they would successfully storm the following morning.

LIVEWORKSHEETS