



## THE STRATEGY OF D DAY



**Next Steps for  
the Informed Citizen**

**The Strategy of D-Day**  
**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**The Greatest Amphibious Operation**  
**Undertaken in the History of Warfare.**

**June 6, 2019**  
**by Dan Regenold**  
**Managing Board Member, EmpowerU**




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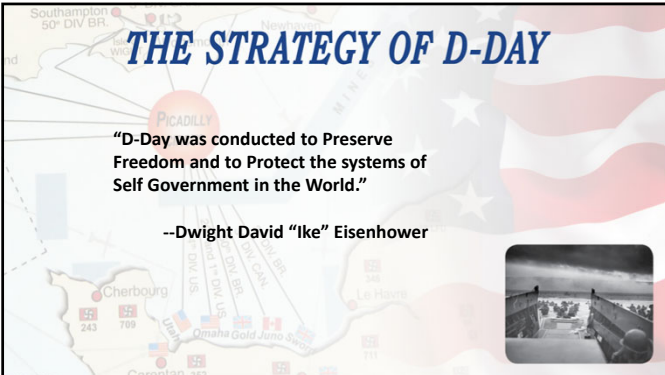
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

“D-Day was conducted to Preserve  
Freedom and to Protect the systems of  
Self Government in the World.”

--Dwight David “Ike” Eisenhower




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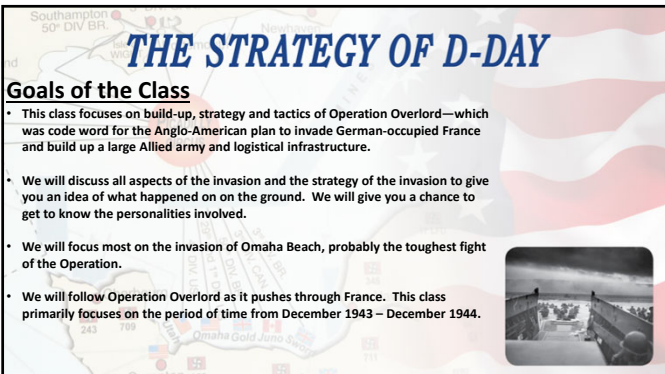
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**Goals of the Class**

- This class focuses on build-up, strategy and tactics of Operation Overlord—which was code word for the Anglo-American plan to invade German-occupied France and build up a large Allied army and logistical infrastructure.
- We will discuss all aspects of the invasion and the strategy of the invasion to give you an idea of what happened on the ground. We will give you a chance to get to know the personalities involved.
- We will focus most on the invasion of Omaha Beach, probably the toughest fight of the Operation.
- We will follow Operation Overlord as it pushes through France. This class primarily focuses on the period of time from December 1943 – December 1944.




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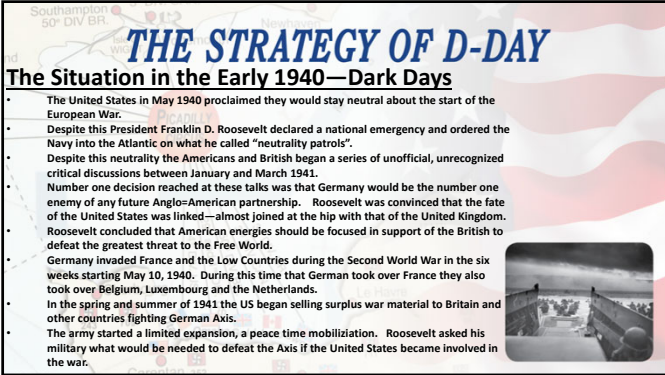
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Situation in the Early 1940—Dark Days

- The United States in May 1940 proclaimed they would stay neutral about the start of the European War.
- Despite this President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared a national emergency and ordered the Navy into the Atlantic on what he called "neutrality patrols".
- Despite this neutrality the Americans and British began a series of unofficial, unrecognized critical discussions between January and March 1941.
- Number one decision reached at these talks was that Germany would be the number one enemy of any future Anglo-American partnership. Roosevelt was convinced that the fate of the United States was linked—almost joined at the hip with that of the United Kingdom. Roosevelt concluded that American energies should be focused in support of the British to defeat the greatest threat to the Free World.
- Germany invaded France and the Low Countries during the Second World War in the six weeks starting May 10, 1940. During this time that German took over France they also took over Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.
- In the spring and summer of 1941 the US began selling surplus war material to Britain and other countries fighting German Axis.
- The army started a limited expansion, a peace time mobilization. Roosevelt asked his military what would be needed to defeat the Axis if the United States became involved in the war.




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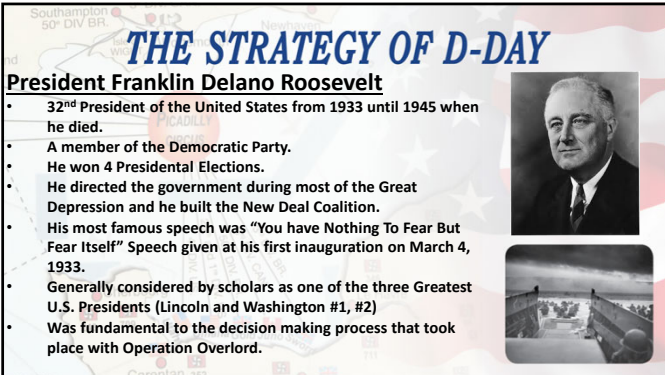
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

- 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States from 1933 until 1945 when he died.
- A member of the Democratic Party.
- He won 4 Presidential Elections.
- He directed the government during most of the Great Depression and he built the New Deal Coalition.
- His most famous speech was "You have Nothing To Fear But Fear Itself" Speech given at his first inauguration on March 4, 1933.
- Generally considered by scholars as one of the three Greatest U.S. Presidents (Lincoln and Washington #1, #2)
- Was fundamental to the decision making process that took place with Operation Overlord.


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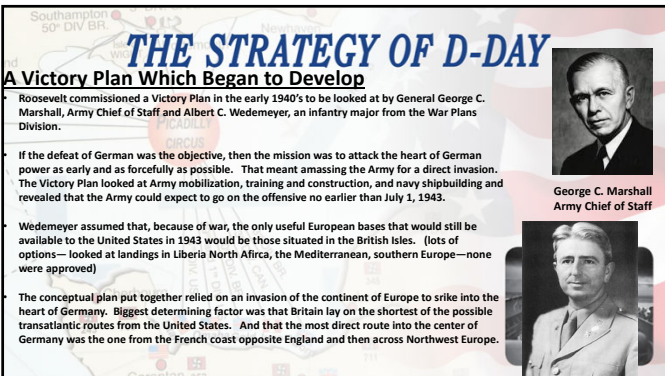
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### A Victory Plan Which Began to Develop

- Roosevelt commissioned a Victory Plan in the early 1940's to be looked at by General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff and Albert C. Wedemeyer, an infantry major from the War Plans Division.
- If the defeat of German was the objective, then the mission was to attack the heart of German power as early and as forcefully as possible. That meant amassing the Army for a direct invasion. The Victory Plan looked at Army mobilization, training and construction, and navy shipbuilding and revealed that the Army could expect to go on the offensive no earlier than July 1, 1943.
- Wedemeyer assumed that, because of war, the only useful European bases that would still be available to the United States in 1943 would be those situated in the British Isles. (lots of options—looked at landings in Liberia North Africa, the Mediterranean, southern Europe—none were approved)
- The conceptual plan put together relied on an invasion of the continent of Europe to strike into the heart of Germany. Biggest determining factor was that Britain lay on the shortest of the possible transatlantic routes from the United States. And that the most direct route into the center of Germany was the one from the French coast opposite England and then across Northwest Europe.



George C. Marshall  
Army Chief of Staff




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**Marshall looked at the 1942 Test in the French Port of Dieppe**

- In August 1942 the British conducted a deliberate large scale invasion of Dieppe.
- The intention wasn't to hold the beachhead but to test military and naval cooperation and use combined arms in large scale landings of infantry and armored troops. Also to test a new piece of equipment the Landing Craft Tank (LCT) to see if tanks could be placed directly on the beaches, thus enabling assault forces to take a port by direct frontal assault.
- The August 19 landings, conducted with many soldiers from Canadian 2<sup>nd</sup> Division and British troops was an unmitigated tactical failure. German resistance was fierce. Within 9 hours of the assault British Commanders were forced to withdraw and over 1000 soldiers died and 2000 soldiers were left as prisoners. Of the 6,086 men who made it ashore, 3,623 (almost 60%) were either killed, wounded or captured. The Royal Air Force failed to lure the Luftwaffe into open battle, and lost 106 aircraft (at least 32 to anti-aircraft fire or accidents), compared to 48 lost by the Luftwaffe. The Royal Navy lost 33 landing craft and one destroyer.




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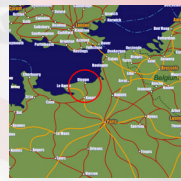
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**Chief Lessons Learned from Dieppe**

- A large bombardment force was essential to crack the prepared defenses of any hostile shore.
- It must be backed up by a strong Naval presence.
- And Overwhelming force was essential if there was to be any hope of success.


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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**The Arcadia Conference**

- From December 22, 1941-January 14, 1942 Roosevelt, Churchill and their chiefs of staff met at the Arcadia Conference in Washington DC, immediately after Pearl Harbor.
- They endorsed the earlier and informal agreement to defeat Germany first, while containing the Japanese.
- They further agreed to wear down Axis strength by lighting a ring around those nations and to use aid to the Russians, naval blockade, strategic bombing and offensives at points of Allied superiority as their principle means.
- Both Britain and America agreed that the Ultimate Attack on the German Occupied continent had to be made in Northwestern Europe.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Eureka Conference—Tehran in Persia (Iran)

- December 1943
- Stalin was invited—he had only met Churchill once. He joined in earnest. Prior he had played no role. He pressed for the Western Allies to open a Second Front that would take some of the pressure off of his forces that were fighting Russians in the East.
- Stalin pressed Churchill and Roosevelt to name a Supreme Commander of forces. Stalin believed if there was no Supreme Commander that plans for the Second Front would not result in victory.
- Eisenhower is appointed as Supreme Commander for the invasion

From the President of the United States:  
"The immediate appointment of General Eisenhower to command the Overlord Operation has thus been decided upon."

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

This is what the world looked like as we entered 1943-1944

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Winston Churchill

- Born in 1874—died in 1965—British statesman, orator and author
- Prime Minister 1940-1945—Led the Conservative Party back to office from 1951-1955. Rose to prominence in National Politics around World War I
- He gained an erratic judgment for his decisions in that war and the decade to follow.
- Told Eisenhower he was going over to the invasion. Eisenhower who was the supreme commander told him. NO! Churchill told him then he would go as a soldier. Ike called the King, who met with Churchill and told him Winston, if you are going, I'm going, and then Churchill backed down.
- In World War II he is credited accurately with Roosevelt and Stalin for shaping the entire strategy of the war.
- Also known for Dunkirk event (1940) where 336,000 British and French Soldiers were evacuated from Europe to Britain and saved by 850 private boats.
- Here is a video of clip of Churchill warning the Allies...

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Joseph Stalin

- Born in 1878 and Died in 1953
- A soviet revolutionary and politician
- Led the Soviet Union from 1920's-1953 as the Secretary of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union—a dictator
- Under Stalin, the Soviet Union was transformed from a peasant society into an industrial and military superpower.
- He ruled with terror.
- He collectivized farming and had his enemies executed or sent to forced labor camps.
- After World War II he engaged in a tense relationship with the West that started the Cold War.
- His role in the decisions that lead up to D-Day cannot be minimized—for this, he was a team player.



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### First Appointment--Supreme Allied Commandeer

- General Dwight David Eisenhower
- Born in 1890 in the army since 1911, but had never seen combat.
- Job Description to have Complete Control over all Allied Forces, regardless of Nationality.
- Ike's title was Commander of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force also known as SHAEF.
- Eisenhower named because of the greater American contribution (%) to Allied Forces.




SHAEF Insignia—A crusader's sword of liberation representing Avenging Justice to break Nazi Power.



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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Eisenhower's Motto:**  
**"Under my command we will never stop training"**

(This was a policy that would later reap dividends on project Overlord)



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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**A Second Key Appointment**

- March 12, 1943
- Lt. General Frederick Morgan of the British Army is named chief planner for a future invasion of Northwest Europe, entitled "Chief of Staff" to the Supreme Allied Commander.
- Marshall boldly declared that the guiding principle of his appointment would be "a full-scale invasion in the spring of 1944". The Brits and Americans disagreed upon the timing. The final agreed upon statement was "A full-scale assault against the Continent in 1944 as early as possible".
- Morgan was commissioned with two fundamental questions:
  - Would an Allied invasion of France in the spring of 1944 have a reasonable chance of success?
  - If so, could sufficient troops and supplies be built up to launch a grand offensive aimed at defeating the German Army.



Lt. General Frederick Morgan

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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**A Third Key Appointment**

- General Sir Bernard Montgomery—from England
- Would act as Ground forces Commander Directing the battle for Eisenhower
- An extremely controversial figure who inspired extremes of either admiration or scorn during his command.
- His appointment bolstered the will of skeptics who believed that an invasion would most likely fail. Montgomery was a proven winner.
- He was involved in drawing up the first plans for Overlord and Normandy during March and July 1943.
- "Monty" claimed that all battles were fought according to a precise "master plan drawn up before hand"



Sir Bernard Montgomery

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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**A Fourth Key --General Leonard T. Gerow**

- Commanding General of the American Ground Force that Assaulted Omaha Beach.
- He was a two star general
- 56 Years Old, considered old for an active combat assignment
- Gerow said, "In my opinion unselfishness is the most important quality of any officer, be it a staff officer or a commander."
- Gerow knew that an amphibious assault against prepared enemy defenses was a dreadfully dubious operation of war.
- He had seen several failures—Dieppe.
- But he knew the terrain better than anyone.
- Gerow said "Our whole success will depend on the speed at which commanders can get out their orders to subordinates".

Gen. Leonard T. Gerow




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**The Team Was In Place**

Eisenhower    Morgan    Montgomery    Gerow




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**The Buildup—Code Name Operation "Bolero"**

- American war production tripled in 1941, increased over fourfold in 1942, fourfold again in 1943.
- US by itself out-produced Germany by four to one tanks, two to one in munitions.
- Henry Ford's Willow Row Plan was producing 500 B-24 Liberators Per Month
- Americans supplied Britain with about a quarter of their weapons and equipment, paid largely by Lend-Lease (British had no \$\$\$).
- Britain supplied Americans with specialized weaponry and provided the barracks, airfields and training grounds for Overlord.
- Britain was super organized for war more than any other member of the allies. Over half the working population was either in uniform or in civilian war employment and half of their GDP was dedicated to war. Strict rationing existed for a British work week of 50 hours.
- Arrival of American troops in Britain meant a sudden increase in prices, and a corresponding shortage of alcohol.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**The Buildup—"Bolero" Part II**

- Preserving the Overlord Secret was of the utmost importance.
- But nothing could prevent the Germans from detecting the presence of plentiful numbers of American, British and Canadian divisions in Britain.
- In the period of a little more than one month in the fall of 1943, four new American divisions (60,000) arrived in England.
- This fact could not escape the attention of German intelligence, let alone a man like Hitler who could perceive that such a large growing force was coming.
- **One division** = usually would contain about 15,000 combat troops and 8,000 support elements.
  - **Brigade** = 3 or more Battalions 1500-3500
  - **Regiment** = 2 or more Battalions 1000-2000




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Operation--Bolero**

- Was succeeding.
- By June 1944 the Allied Forces assembled for D-Day numbered 1.7 Million. of which 1.40 million were British, and 285,000 were American. The Canadians provided about 44,000 troops.

**Armaments included:**

- 1,300 Warships
- 1,600 Merchant ships
- 4,000 Landing ships and craft
- 13,000 Aircraft (5,000 fighters and 4,500 bombers, 3,500 gliders)




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**


**Assembling these troops was a colossal undertaking.....**

British provided 3 armored divisions, eight infantry divisions, two airborne divisions and 10 independent brigades

Canadians provide one armored division, two infantry divisions and one independent brigade.

Poles provide one armored division and a parachute brigade.

Americans provided six armored divisions (out of 16), 13 infantry divisions and two airborne divisions (285,000 people)




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Montgomery's Plan Develops

- Americans would take the westernmost beaches codenamed Utah and Omaha. British and Canadians would take the eastern beaches code named Gold, Juno and Sword.
- Everything had to be ready by "Y" Day—Ready Day—a Date decided upon by Eisenhower.
- To overcome enemy strongpoints the Allies would need to get tanks and artillery ashore and inland quickly, past beach defenses, over soft sand and sea walls.
- Situation in France was complicated. As the date of the invasion drew closer DeGaulle, the leader of France claimed the right to assume the government of France upon liberation. The French surrendered to Germany in June 1940. The Americans and British were insisting on some form of election before recognizing any new French Government. This was insulting to DeGaulle.

Charles DeGaulle on Left




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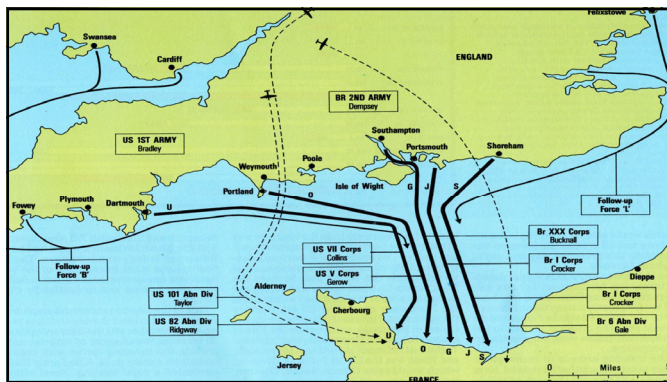
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Advantage—Enigma--The Ultra Secret

- The most carefully guarded intelligence secret during the war was the Ultra secret which played a major part in providing the allies with a picture of German Defenses in Normandy.
- Before the war the Germans had started encoding radio signals in a typewriter like machine called Enigma, based on a set of coded wheels. (movie)
- British mathematicians and cryptanalysts and a guy named Alan Turing based in England were able to build a primitive computer to break the Enigma ciphers, which helped us create a very accurate picture of what Normandy looked like.
- This happened between 1942-1944.

German Enigma Coding Machine





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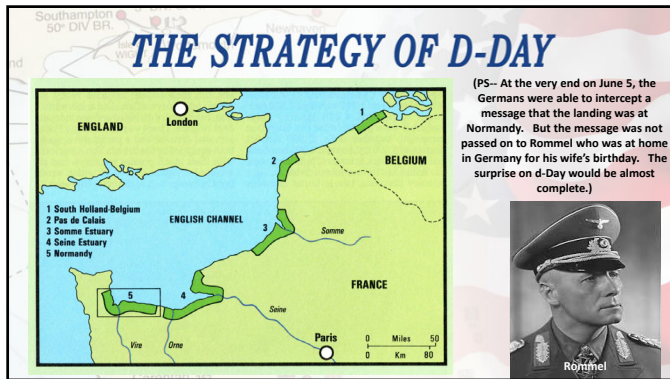
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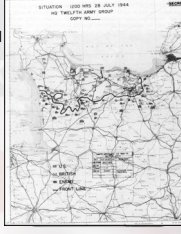
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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**67<sup>th</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance Group**

- The most secret photographic mission of the war was accomplished by the 67<sup>th</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance group without the loss of any personnel or aircraft.
- Their mission was to take Merton Oblique Photographs (kind of like a grid) of the 100 miles of French Coastline.
- During this photographic run the photo ship had to maintain a constant altitude of 3,500 feet and fly an absolutely straight line for an average of four minutes.
- Goal: When sunrise hit the coast on June 6, 1944 these photos would allow the men to recognize all of the natural and man-made landmarks of their landing areas—(that was the plan!)




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**German Defenses**

- Germans faced the disadvantage of operating out of a foreign country.
- They were unable to create a partnership with the French, Belgians or Dutch—the other areas they had occupied.
- It was estimated that 10% of the population might actively resist.
- Germany had major problems with the French railroads, as the resistance had destroyed much of this network prior to D-Day. The French Resistance was highly organized.
- Thousands of German supply trains were stuck in Belgium and Eastern France unable to proceed westward because of the shattered railway system which the resistance had sabotaged.
- Logistics would become very important.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Timing**

- Germans believed that an invasion would have to happen after winter storms—most probably May which would be the earliest time that 5 days of good weather could be guaranteed.
- After studying tide charts, the Americans discovered that only the period from June 5-7, 1944 would present favorable conditions.
- Hitler wasn't sure on Pas de Calais and was forced to maintain a presence along the entire coastline. He also had to defend on the Eastern Front against the Russian Army.
- Also, there were uprisings in Yugoslavia and Greece.
- All of these demands greatly compromised the capabilities of Hitler's Germany. Hitler had a lot of problems on his hands.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Hitler**

- Had come to believe that the struggle against the Red Army in Russian was no longer decisive to winning the war.
- In Hitler's view an attempted invasion by the Allies would represent a golden opportunity for the Reich. If they could defeat the British and Americans then the Allies would be incapable, for psychological reasons alone, of mounting another invasion in the foreseeable future.
- Win a decisive victory against the Allies in the West, and then concentrate all forces in the East to crush the Soviets.
- Hitler was quoted saying, "Germany's primary take for 1944 for the future lies in inflicting a decisive defeat upon the Allies in the West."



Adolph Hitler, German Dictator from 1933 to 1945




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**More on Hitler**

- Germans and Hitler considered the Americans as timid soldiers who often missed opportunities.
- He believed the Americans were not "tactically at all clever"
- The Germans were well aware that when Overlord began the British were at maximum strength.
- Because of this, Hitler knew Montgomery would try and have to win with brains and keep his risks to a minimum.
- Hitler knew that more American units were available to fight if things got tough.



Adolph Hitler, German Dictator from 1933 to 1945




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Hitler's Atlantic Wall of Defense**

- To prepare for the inevitable Allied Invasion Hitler had:
  - Had to create a defensive line of 3000 miles of Coastline from Holland to Spain
  - Completed 12,247 fortifications (943 on Mediterranean coast)
  - Built 500,000 beach obstacles
  - Laid 6.5 million mines
  - Installed Field Marshall Erwin Rommel as the principle defender of the West.
  - Rommel had made every possible effort to turn the coast into a fearful obstacle.
  - Rommel was focused on Pas de Calais and the German's greatest resources were there.


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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Field General Erwin Rommel**

- The "Desert Fox"—known for his leadership of German and Italian forces in the North Africa Campaign.
- He built the Atlantic Wall along Normady's Coast.
- Known for the term "blitzkrieg" which is a military tactic to create disorganization and psychological shock and disorganization among enemy forces.
- Was highly decorated in World War I and for his action on the Italian Front. In 1937 he published his classic book on military tactics.
- Rommel supported Hitler and the Nazi seizure of power. Rommel had made every possible effort to turn the coast into a fearful obstacle.



Field Marshall Erwin Rommel




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**More on Field General Erwin Rommel**

- Rommel was obsessed with the idea that the key to defensive success within his sector rested in obstructing and mining the entire coast of northern France and Belgium.
- Rommel didn't get the time he needed. By June 6, 1944 Less than half of his beach obstacles had been installed, and the earliest impediments had deteriorated.
- Many of Rommel's men were second-rate soldiers (Poles and other ethnic groups) and he reasoned that first-rate coastal fortifications could compensate for these human deficiencies.



Field Marshall Erwin Rommel




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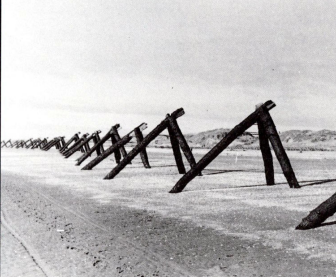
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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**



Part of 500,000 Barriers: (L) Mines Placed or Rafts floated in water. (R) Barriers placed along the beach with mines on them to deter tank and water landings.




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Southampton 50<sup>th</sup> DIV BR. Newhaven

## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Building all These Barriers

- Had greatly compromised the equipment of the Nazi Armies
- Great numbers of foreign workers were being used in factories to release German workers for the army.
- Fuel was in very short supply.
- In many cases the Germans were forced to use bicycles and horses for transportation.
- 50% of the German troops were under 20 years of age.
- Hitler's Navy was composed of only 3 destroyers, 5 torpedo boats, 34 motor gun boats, 163 mine-hunters and 34 U boats.
- The only effective weapon to combat an Allied invasion was the use of mines.
- Despite equipment problems Hitler and Rommel were convinced they would win!




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Southampton 50<sup>th</sup> DIV BR. Newhaven

## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Day of the Invasion

- Could the Allies achieve a tactical surprise?
- At one moment we almost blew it. Original plans called for D-Day June 5. Bad weather changed it.
- When Eisenhower postponed the landing all ships already at sea were ordered back to the nearest harbor.
- One convoy of 135 vessels didn't receive the order and headed to Normandy. They were not reached until they were 25 miles away.
- The German Security force had reported that the Allies had gone to the highest state of Alert. This was partially detected when the Allies changed key code settings for radio traffic.
- The Allies succeeded in almost achieving a Complete Tactical Surprise




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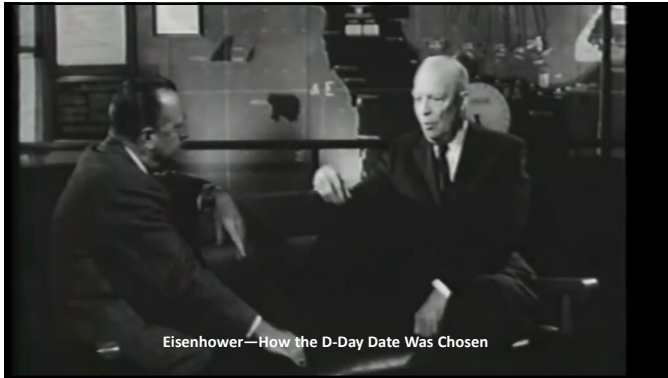
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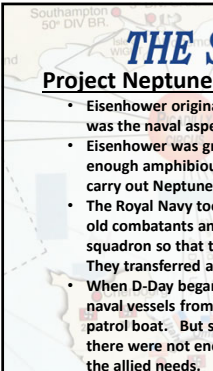
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Project Neptune—Naval Aspect

- Eisenhower originally planned Project Neptune which was the naval aspect of Project Overlord on June 5, 1944.
- Eisenhower was greatly concerned that they lacked enough amphibious vessels and bombardment ships to carry out Neptune.
- The Royal Navy took drastic steps to help and laid up 49 old combatants and decommissioned a minelaying squadron so that their crews could man more ships. They transferred airmen to sea service.
- When D-Day began on June 6, 1944 there were 5,300 naval vessels from the largest battleship to the smallest patrol boat. But still the crux of the problem was that there were not enough amphibious types to service all of the allied needs.



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Project Neptune

- The journey from England to Normandy was only 120 miles but 5 of those miles were completed traversed with a formidable German mine belt that would wreak havoc on Allied ships. Minesweepers didn't guarantee results.(only 10% of Minesweepers were American)
- On June 6 the Royal Navy put forth:
  - 3261 British Ships
  - 865 US Ships
  - 49 French, Polish, Greek dutch and Norwegian Ships
- US Forces were worried that the British had not been highly successful with amphibious missions which are the most complex of all military operations.
- Training was rigorous.
- Allied maintenance helped keep the fleet at the top of its game.



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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Project Neptune—Best Chance**

- The best chance the Germans had to defeat the invasion was with sea mines.
- Yet the five mile mine belt that the Allies had worried about turned out to be almost empty.
- Allied minesweepers detected and neutralized only 29 mines throughout the mine barrier.
- Note: Hitler had developed by 1943 an unsweepable mine but these had not been laid in appreciable numbers in the mine belt off Normandy. (moored to the sea bottom with a chain and armed with a fuse that would detonate the mine when nearby water pressured altered it).




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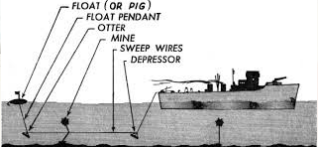
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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**How Minesweepers Worked**

- The earliest sweeping system, devised to clear anchored contact mines, consisted of two ships steaming across a minefield towing a wire rope between them; mine mooring lines were cut by sawlike projections on the sweep wire or by cutting jaws. When the released mine rose to the surface, it was destroyed by gunfire.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Keys to Project Neptune**

- One of the keys to a successful amphibious operation is to select the day and time when the weather and tides are optimum.
- To increase the chances of surprise and provide the invading forces with concealment from enemy guns, Allied army leaders advocated a night landing.
- Naval officers however, made it clear that a landing during daylight hours was absolutely essential to ensure accurate naval gunfire support and to coordinate launching and reloading of landing craft.
- Also, Allied underwater "miners" needed light to clear lanes to the beach.
- Allied planners wanted the assault to be 3-4 hours before high tide and be preceded by a moonlit night.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Plan

- Allied forces had to seize the beachhead and hold it.
- The attack will be preceded by a bombing which may last up to six hours.
- They then needed to break out into the interior of France
- Then capture the port of Cherbourg, the only major port of the Cotentin Peninsula (which would alleviate some of their logistical problems).
- Cherbourg was so important that it was feared the Germans would sabotage Cherbourg if this became a reality.
- On May 25, 1944 shortly before midnight all naval officers with security clearances were commanded to open their top secret orders for invasion—700 pages long and three inches thick. Execute Neptune!




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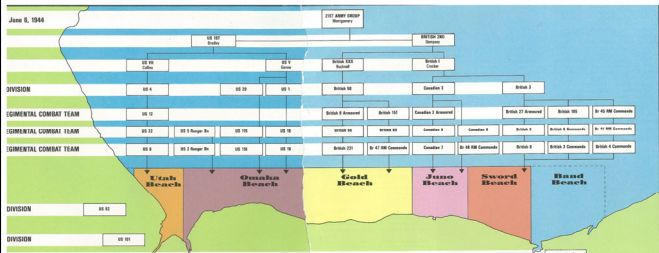
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Meticulously Planned

- Allied forces had to seize the beachhead and hold it.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### A Extra Bonanza...

- Allies intercepted a series of transmissions from Berlin to Tokyo made by Gen. Hiroshi Oshima, Japanese Ambassador to Germany.
- He had just completed a personal inspect of Hitler's Atlantic Wall and had sent his superiors detail reports of German defenses.
- We now knew what the weaknesses were.
- One of the major weaknesses of the Germans was their inferiority in the air.



General Hiroshi Oshima, General in the Imperial Japanese Army




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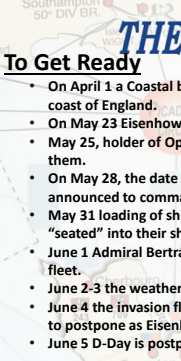
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### To Get Ready

- On April 1 a Coastal ban on visitors was imposed on the entire south coast of England.
- On May 23 Eisenhower sets D-Day for June 5.
- May 25, holder of Operation Neptune Orders are ordered to open them.
- On May 28, the date of D-Day and the 14 hours for each beach are announced to commanders.
- May 31 loading of ships and landing craft beings –all personnel are “seated” into their ships. Mail stopped.
- June 1 Admiral Bertram Ramsay assumed command of the invasion fleet.
- June 2-3 the weather worsens
- June 4 the invasion fleet begins to get underway, the signal is sent to postpone as Eisenhower gets a bad weather report.
- June 5 D-Day is postponed to June 6

Admiral Bertram Ramsay, a royal Navy Officer who commanded naval forces on D-day



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This is What Loading of the Ships Looked Like

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Waiting

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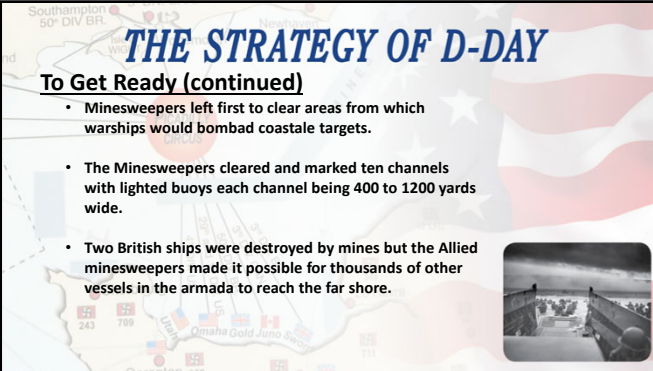

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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**To Get Ready (continued)**

- Minesweepers left first to clear areas from which warships would bombard coastal targets.
- The Minesweepers cleared and marked ten channels with lighted buoys each channel being 400 to 1200 yards wide.
- Two British ships were destroyed by mines but the Allied minesweepers made it possible for thousands of other vessels in the armada to reach the far shore.


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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**LCT**

- The first waves of the landing force's objectives was to deliver and release into the water 32 amphibious LCT –Landing Craft Tanks which were designed to Land Tanks on the Beach. These armored vehicles were intended to provide the infantry with direct fire support.






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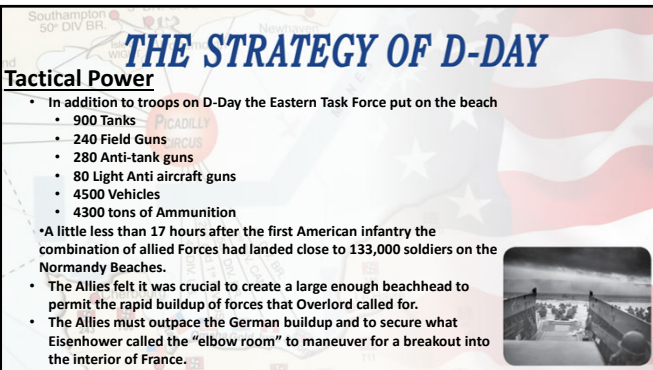

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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Tactical Power**

- In addition to troops on D-Day the Eastern Task Force put on the beach
  - 900 Tanks
  - 240 Field Guns
  - 280 Anti-tank guns
  - 80 Light Anti aircraft guns
  - 4500 Vehicles
  - 4300 tons of Ammunition
- A little less than 17 hours after the first American infantry the combination of allied Forces had landed close to 133,000 soldiers on the Normandy Beaches.
- The Allies felt it was crucial to create a large enough beachhead to permit the rapid buildup of forces that Overlord called for.
- The Allies must outpace the German buildup and to secure what Eisenhower called the "elbow room" to maneuver for a breakout into the interior of France.


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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Hitler's Paranoia

- Hitler was very careful to observe the principle of power sharing.
- Nobody was allowed to become powerful enough to threaten him.
- Hitler was concerned about Rommel's growing power and transferred some power to Gerd Von Rundstedt another Field Marshall in the Nazi Army.
- This power split proved to be a breeding ground for petty jealousies, and obsession with power struggles.



Gerd Von Rundstedt




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Hitler's / Rommel

- Hitler saw the major threat of the allies to Cherbourg which is along the Cotentin Peninsula (see next page). Rommel did too, as he personally traversed the peninsula and energized local commanders
- Rommel installed "Rommelsspargel" poles a foot in diameter and six feet high vertically in fields to disrupt parachute drop zones or to block glider landing zones. In May 1944 the Allies confirmed thousands of Rommelsspargels appearing on air photos.




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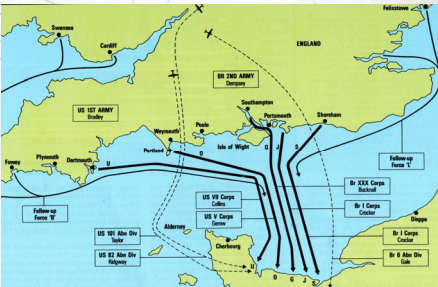

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY


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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

Rommels Spargel Poles—(Rommel's Asparagus) Wooden Poles made from trees to deter landings from Allied Gliders.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**The Logistical Plan**

- Overlord planners had arranged the pre-storage of eight days of supplies in various landing craft.
- The majority of the resupply would begin to arrive in Normandy via larger Liberty ships.
- Such large trans-shipments of war material demanded careful beach organization a task assigned to several engineer brigades.
- Minefields and obstacles had to be cleared.
- Planners hoped to use the major ports of Cherbourg, Lorient and Brest a month after invasion to send supplies.
- An infantry division required roughly 700 tons of supplies per day. Projections called for 37 divisions (555,000) to be ashore consuming 26,000 tons of supplies a day 780,000 tons per month.




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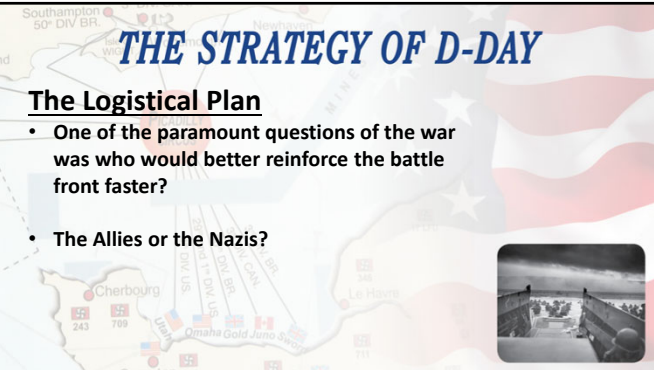
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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**The Logistical Plan**

- One of the paramount questions of the war was who would better reinforce the battle front faster?
- The Allies or the Nazis?




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**The Air Battle**

- During the spring of 1944 Spitfires, Mosquitos, Mustangs and Lightnings for the Allies flew many hundreds of sorties over France and Belgium.
- It was vitally important that the aerial activity should not betray the invasion area, so for each sortie flown over western Normandy three were flown over the Pas de Calais.
- Important tasks: Knock out radar stations along the French and Belgian Coasts.
- A total of 72 specific objectives were signaled out for attack: 39 in western Germany and 33 in French and Belgium.
- By June 5, 24 bridges over the Seine between Paris and the sea 18 had been destroyed, and 36 Luftwaffe airfields in France, Holland and Belgium were under attack.

British Mosquito


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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Black and White Stripes**

- On June 5, all aircraft taking part in the support of the invasion were painted with distinctive black and white stripes to assist in identification.


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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Luftwaffe in France, May 1944**

- The Luftwaffe was organized under the command of Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle.
- It had been in the west since 1940 when it had participated in the fall of France and the Battle of Britain.
- Now four years later it faced the might of the Allied air forces.
- On paper the Luftlotte 3 had in service a total of about 890 aircraft of all types. Of this figure it is estimated that only 497 were serviceable in late May.
- The Luftwaffe suffered from lack of fuel and skilled pilots while operating old warplanes like the Messerschmitt.
- The number of Allied aircraft vastly made the Luftwaffe powerless.

Hugo Sperrle, German Field Marshal of the Luftwaffe during World War II.




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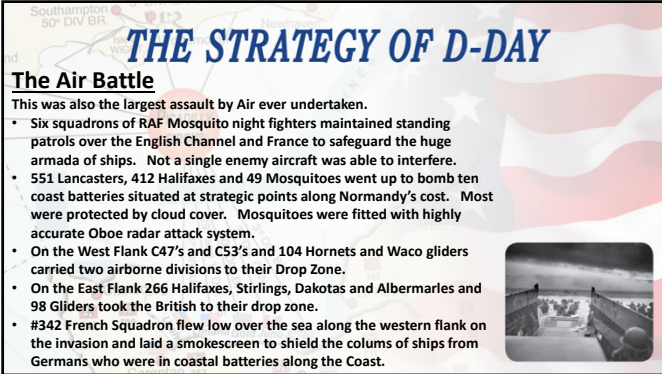
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Air Battle

This was also the largest assault by Air ever undertaken.

- Six squadrons of RAF Mosquito night fighters maintained standing patrols over the English Channel and France to safeguard the huge armada of ships. Not a single enemy aircraft was able to interfere.
- 551 Lancasters, 412 Halifaxes and 49 Mosquitoes went up to bomb ten coast batteries situated at strategic points along Normandy's coast. Most were protected by cloud cover. Mosquitoes were fitted with highly accurate Oboe radar attack system.
- On the West Flank C47's and C53's and 104 Hornets and Waco gliders carried two airborne divisions to their Drop Zone.
- On the East Flank 266 Halifaxes, Stirlings, Dakotas and Albermarles and 98 Gliders took the British to their drop zone.
- #342 French Squadron flew low over the sea along the western flank on the invasion and laid a smokescreen to shield the columns of ships from Germans who were in coastal batteries along the Coast.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY



**C-47**



**Halifax**



**P-47 Thunderbolt**

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Allied Air Power

By D-Day the allies had the following aircraft available:

- 2800 heavy bombers
- 1500 medium light bombers
- 3700 fighter- Bombers
- 8000 Aircraft

### Luftwaffe Units

By D-Day the German Luftwaffe had the following air craft available:

- 140 Medium Bombers
- 90 Anti-shiping aircraft
- 200 Fighters- Bombers
- 56 Night Fighters
- 486 Aircraft

**The Allies had a HUGE Air Tactical Advantage!**




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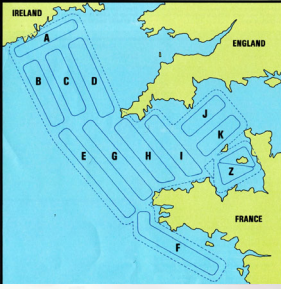
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Fighting Back--Submarines

- On D-Day German naval command ordered submarine flotillas in Brittany and Normandy to move against an Allied landing.
- 16 German U-boats sortied from Brest and La Pallice bound for attack positions.
- Another 19 submarines formed a defense line off Brittany to contest any Allied movements.
- Within hours British aircraft sank and damaged six boats and forced the remainder to run submerged limiting their combat effectiveness.
- These losses forced the German naval capable units with the most sophisticated equipment to be recalled to Brittany because of damages.




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Eisenhower on June 5--Final Plans and What He Did

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Southwick House, The Advance Command Post of the Supreme Headquarters Allied expeditionary Force in Portsmouth.




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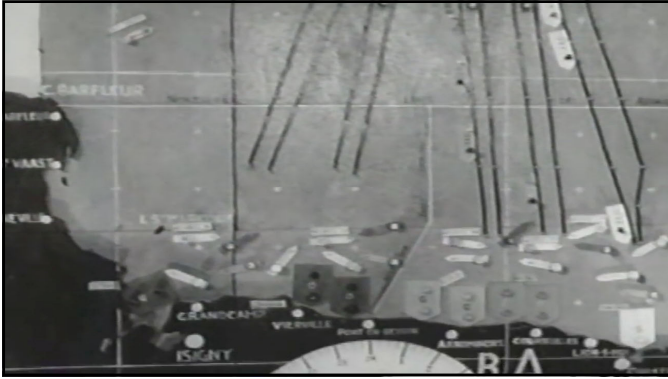
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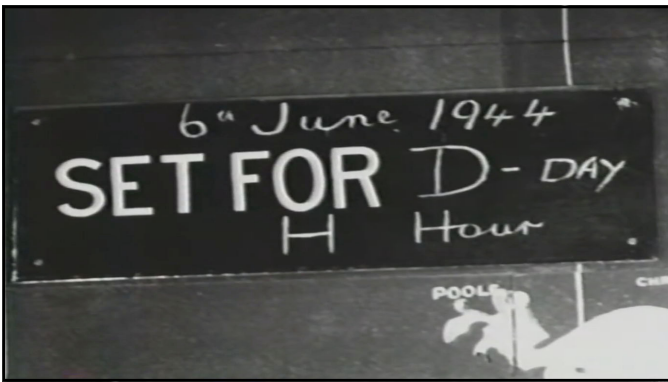
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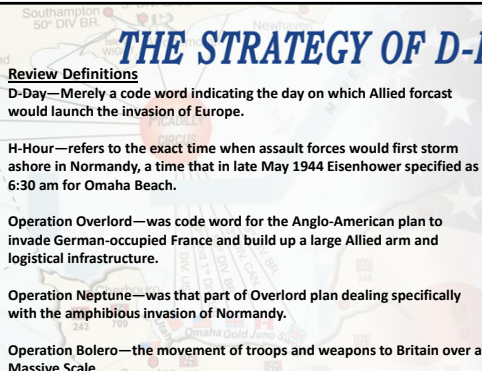
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**Review Definitions**


**D-Day**—Merely a code word indicating the day on which Allied forces would launch the invasion of Europe.

**H-Hour**—refers to the exact time when assault forces would first storm ashore in Normandy, a time that in late May 1944 Eisenhower specified as 6:30 am for Omaha Beach.

**Operation Overlord**—was code word for the Anglo-American plan to invade German-occupied France and build up a large Allied arm and logistical infrastructure.

**Operation Neptune**—was that part of Overlord plan dealing specifically with the amphibious invasion of Normandy.

**Operation Bolero**—the movement of troops and weapons to Britain over a Massive Scale



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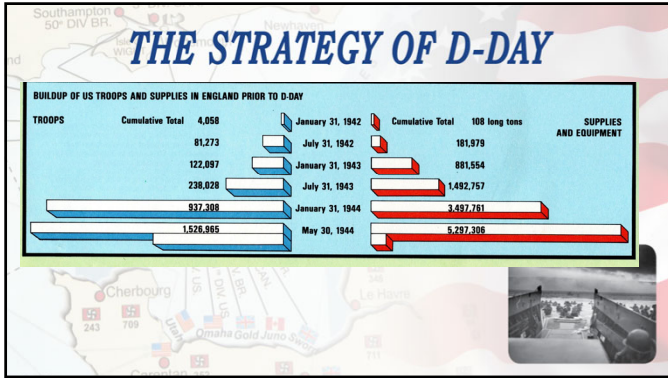
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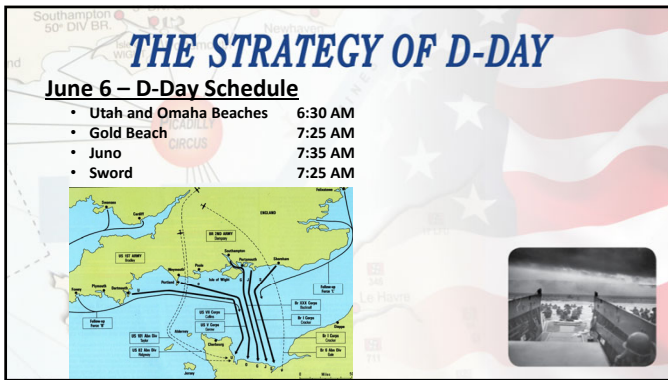
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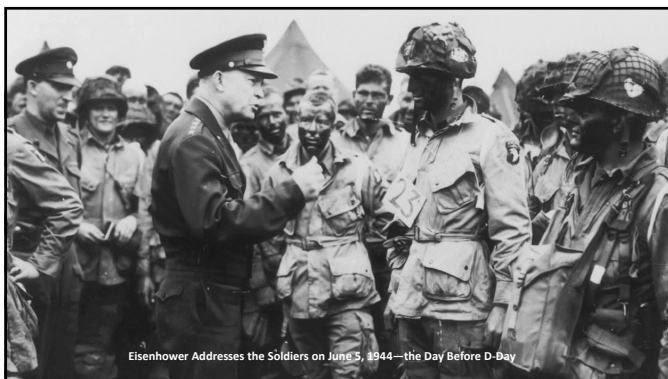
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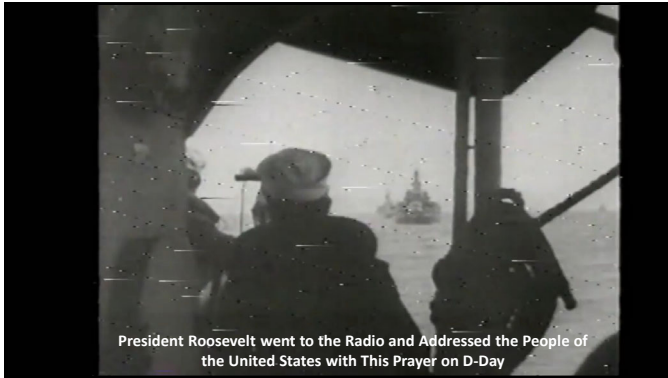
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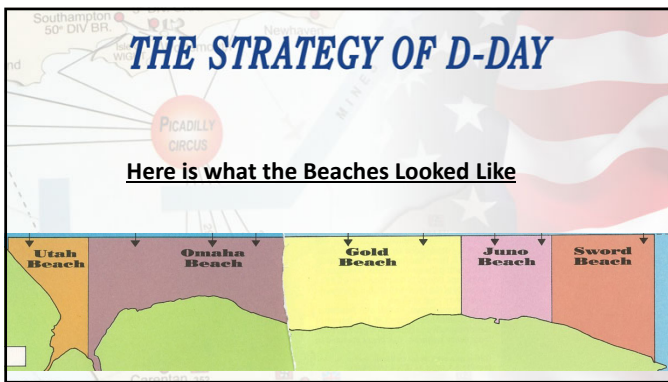
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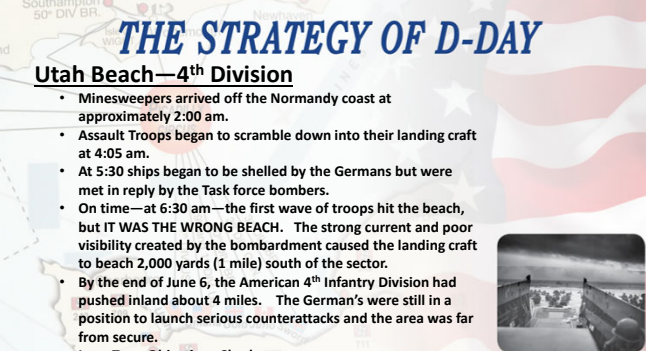
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### THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

#### Utah Beach—4<sup>th</sup> Division

- Minesweepers arrived off the Normandy coast at approximately 2:00 am.
- Assault Troops began to scramble down into their landing craft at 4:05 am.
- At 5:30 ships began to be shelled by the Germans but were met in reply by the Task force bombers.
- On time—at 6:30 am—the first wave of troops hit the beach, but IT WAS THE WRONG BEACH. The strong current and poor visibility created by the bombardment caused the landing craft to beach 2,000 yards (1 mile) south of the sector.
- By the end of June 6, the American 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had pushed inland about 4 miles. The German's were still in a position to launch serious counterattacks and the area was far from secure.
- Long Term Objective: Cherbourg



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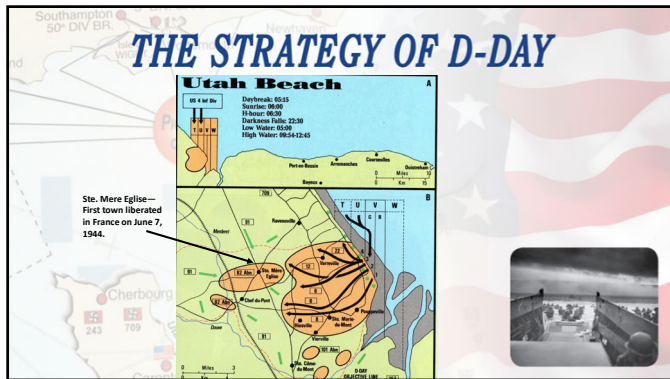
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach -(we will focus on)

- It's sectors stretched over 7,000 yards (4 miles) and was the largest of Overlord's assault areas.
- Major General Gerow's planned to land two regiments including the famous 1st Infantry. Together there were over 34,000 men and 3,300 vehicles planned.
- The beach was backed by high bluffs which merge into cliffs.
- Five draws provided small exit corridors off the beach, one housing a paved road which could be used for advancing into France.
- The German 352 Division took over the protection of this area in March, and was a COMPLETE SURPRISE TO THE V CORPS, who expected to not encounter strong resistance. It took the capture and interrogation of the first German prisoners to understand that the Allies had completely missed the 352 Division at Omaha.
- Rommel had moved the 352 Division in March.
- The Allied goal for the day one was to land and advance two-three miles.



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (II)

- Omar Bradley wanted to do something on Omaha Beach that had never been done.
- To reach the Normandy coast at the appointed hour the B-24's would have to take off and assemble large, tight groups in darkness.
- This was a tactic the Eighth Air Force was not trained to do.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command would provide 75 squadrons of 6 heavy bombers each for a total of 450 planes.
- To avoid craters on the beach Bradley planned to use 100 lb bomb—normally a highly explosive but consider light bomb (to not create to many big holes in the beach).



Omar Bradley,  
General of the US Army



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (III)

- If sunrise would be at 5:58 am and the first waves of ground troops were to hit at 6:31 am, the naval bombardment would only have about 35 minutes to work. Each target at Omaha was assigned a number a description and an X-Y map coordinate.
- Interesting. Goal each LCT would approach to within about 1.5 miles from the beach—6:27 am. If the invasion was on schedule the LCT would let loose a continuous barrage of rockets to protect the assault troops.
- "One soldier said, " *We went right in front of the bow of the battleship Texas when it fired a full salvo. It was just like a giant door slamming, and it really shook me up. You could actually see the shells flying through the air towards the shore.*"



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (IV)

- Takeoff times for the bomb groups would be between 1:55 and 3:00 am. Each group of 6 planes had 17 minutes to get it's 36 aircraft airborne.
- Each airplane held 2,400 gallons of high-octane gasoline.
- Each of the 13 Omaha Beach targets would be bombed by 36 Liberators.
- Each bomber held 52- 100-pound bombs with instantaneous fuses, set to detonate immediately on impact.
- The bombers were trained for flying tight, but flying close up it was extremely hazardous--at night it was like driving a car with no headlights in a tunnel.
- No radio talk was allowed. Cloud cover was heavy.
- The bombers radar (H2X) was the only means by which crews could determine the proper bomb release points.
- A B-24 Liberator had a cruising speed that covered 100 yards per second. If a bomb release was delayed twenty or more seconds it would cause all bombs to impact a mile past their target.

B-24 Liberator Airplane

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (V)

- Gerow and Bradley resolved to land 112 specially modified U.S. Army Sherman Tanks on Omaha Beach before a single infantryman set foot in France.
- 16 LCT landing craft would launch a total of 64 (DD) Duplex Drive Sherman Tanks about 3 miles offshore, they would land on Omaha Beach at 6:25 am.
- Goal: The Sherman's could take out a German pillbox or serve as an excellent shield against enemy fire as the first troops crossed the beach.
- A shroud of rubber enable the tank to float. Once on land, the driver switched to power treads rather than propeller.
- But the sea was too rough for the tanks to launch. The first three tanks that drove off the LCT sank. All 16 of Company C's tanks sank.
- The infantry men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division would now be lacking 27 of the 32 DD tanks that the top brass had planned for them.
- Unbeknownst to the allies the Germans had many large caliber guns deployed in pillboxes, some holding "88's" whose shells had sliced through Allied tanks.

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (VI)--The German Pillboxes

- A German machine gunner was positioned on the high ground at either end of the coast or in a pillbox and and could fire his weapon lengthwise down the beach.
- This would inflict a hit a huge number of the opposition.
- Generally, only a direct hit from a heavy naval shell could penetrate a pillbox, (however a bazooka round or flamethrower blast fired directly into the pillbox hole could wound applicants).
- The best pillboxes built by the Germans were the pillboxes along the 5 Normandy beaches.

A German Pillbox

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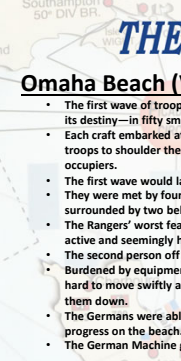
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (VII)

- The first wave of troops on Omaha was transported to its destination—and its destiny—in fifty small landing craft.
- Each craft embarked at least 31 soldiers, yielding 1,550 (50x31) total first troops to shoulder the burden of introducing the US Army to German occupiers.
- The first wave would land on a front of more than 4.5 miles.
- They were met by four almost impregnable strongpoint pillboxes atop a cliff, surrounded by two belts of barbed wire.
- The Rangers' worst fears were immediately realized: the enemy was very active and seemingly had every foot of the beach zeroed in.
- The second person off the first boat was immediately killed.
- Burdened by equipment and waterlogged uniforms, the Rangers found it hard to move swiftly across the soft sand, and the Germans cut many of them down.
- The Germans were able to stop the first wave almost totally from making progress on the beach.
- The German Machine guns started spewing out 1,200 bullets per minute.



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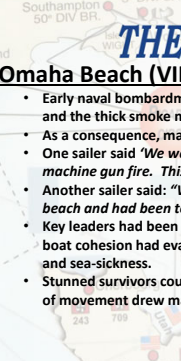
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (VIII)

- Early naval bombardment had set grass on fire on the bluffs and the thick smoke made landmarks almost unrecognizable.
- As a consequence, many soldiers landed over a mile off target.
- One sailor said "We were all seasick and heading straight into machine gun fire. This was my definition off Hell."
- Another sailor said: "We didn't expect any trouble on the beach and had been told not to run"
- Key leaders had been killed or wounded on the advance, and boat cohesion had evaporated—due to all the hours of waiting and sea-sickness.
- Stunned survivors could not fathom what to do next. Any kind of movement drew machine gun fire.



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (IX)

- Next the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry from the first division was to arrive with 750 men transported in 24 landing craft over two miles.
- They faced the same difficulties—the current took them eastward off their landing mark. A smart commander noticed the error and ordered the boats to be taken back. They arrived 90 minutes late.
- The Infantry men waded and struggled ashore by crossing 200 yards of open beach under intense enemy fire—machine gun, rifle, mortar, artillery and antitank. Many men were hit and injured while still in the water.
- Landings were made in water about four feet deep with 75 yards of water to cross—the troops were losing equipment, their was intense gunfire.
- "PFC John Sweeney said, *"People were falling all around me. I didn't realize I was hit in the arm and leg until later."*
- There was absolutely no cover up to the enemy's positions. Men fell, left and right and the water reddened with blood. Men were falling on all sides.
- German defenders were displaying a ferocity that no one had foreseen.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (X)

- Rommels scheme since 1944—every beach on which the Allies could conceivable land would be lined with hundreds of obstacles, most topped with mines.
- The obstacles were causing chaos with boats trying to land to drop the soldiers off.
- Large demolition teams of over 1000 men were to swamp the beach and destroy the pillboxes.
- The casualties among the demolition teams within the first thirty minutes of the invasion were so great that no historical account of their work can ever be complete. The demolition teams only destroyed 6 of the 16 targets they had planned on.
- There was a feeling of the men that their losses would have been cut in half had their loads been cut likewise. Men were stumbling in the water.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (XI)

- Probably the most formidable barrier on Omaha Beach to moving inland was the massive concrete wall the Germans had erected across the mouth of the Vierville draw. No American vehicle could leave the beach via this exit unless this wall was obliterated.
- Gerow's mission was to open the Exit Road.
- Unfortunately the aerial bombardment had not helped do the job. The soldiers reacted, *"Omaha Beach was unscarred by the bombs"*
- 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Edward McNabb, *"We looked for craters from the Air Corps that the Navy had promised us...there were none."* (Bradley's 100 lb bombs)
- Private Robert Sales, from 116<sup>th</sup> Infantry said: *"Machine guns were all over top of us, just like you were in a bees' nest. The captain was the first one off the boat and was hit on the ramp and fell into the water."*
- The Germans line of sight (they were raised) was so dominating (from their pillboxes) that no American could move anywhere without being detected and in all probability shot.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Omaha Beach (XII)**

- All of the problems were not known by Commanders. Bradley, Gerow were simply waiting and offering encouragement. There was no communication to tell them about the mess the troops were in.
- By the end of the invasion's first hour a trickle of information filtered back from the beach.
- Finally, Colonel Benjamin Talley one of Gerow's most trusted V Corps was able to report to Gerow by radio on the events he had seen on the beach. He gave the General no good news.
- 7:20 am a naval officer—unidentified aboard a control vessel reached the conclusion that any further landings in this section of Omaha Beach would be suicidal.
- The British wave leader followed this advice and landed his soldiers at about 7:50 am in a safer area of the beach.
- In the first hour 6,000 troops landed on Omaha Beach.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Omaha Beach (XIII)**

- By 8:00 am a crisis was unquestionably at hand. The arrival of the Infantry units had created dangerous congestion along the 4 mile beach.
- Soldiers were told "Get off the Beach"
- At 7:30 am twelve officers including one general, one colonel and five majors arrived on the beach. The officers concluded that there was no evidence of aerial bombardment on Omaha.
- Arriving as one of them was Brig. Gen Norman D. Cota the 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, probably the oldest soldier to land at 51.
- Here Cota observed GI's lying prone, piled up in heaps, the invasion was dangerously out of kilter.
- Cota was fearless and a great leader. He came about Colonel Schneider of the Rangers and said, "Colonel, you are going to have to lead the way. We are bogged down. *"We've got to get these men off this goddamned beach."*
- Schneider turned toward the men and said "Rangers, lead the way."



Norman D. Cota




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Omaha Beach (XIV)**

- After two calamitous hours, the efforts of the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry and other units started to show their first successes.
- They were able to penetrate a barbed wire barrier set back 150 yds from the beach and bluff where the Germans were.
- 450 Newly arriving rangers, under the encouragement of General Cota headed up the bluffs. There was a house at the top of the bluffs which was occupied by the Germans. The Allies took it.
- The Nazis had put an incalculable amount of labor, time and resources into the Atlantic Wall and now after two hours the Americans had gone through it.
- At 11:00 am Gerow did receive the positive intelligence: "Men advancing up slow behind towards the exit area of Omaha Beach."




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Omaha Beach (XV)**

- At 10:00 Co. George Taylor of the 16<sup>th</sup> rounded up every available tank and launched an assault at the exit.
- Brig. Gen. Willard Wyman, 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was sent onshore because of the lack of reliable information being received.
- The General deduced the invasion had broken down.
- Even if a few small groups had penetrated the bluffs (toward exits), the draws must be opened as soon as possible as there was too much congestion on the beach.
- 100 bulldozers, tractors, half-tracks and were trapped on the beach like caged animals.
- Wyman said *"The beach has too many vehicles, send combat troops"*.
- 3,000 more combat troops arrived and the site of Germans prisoners coming down the bluffs with their hands over their heads started to come.



Willard Wyman



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (XVI)

- Lieutenant Col. George Gibbs, the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Divisions 7<sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion took charge.
- Gibbs view was that every soldier on Omaha Beach must temporarily disregard his military specialty, grab a rifle and a few grenades and try his hand at infantry.
- Gibbs directed fire on targets, which were knocked out and the infantry were able to advance as the enemy layed down heavy mortar fire on the Allies.
- Shortly before noon the German strongpoints began to clear out.
- The enemy started to be driven back and Company A began to clear the St. Laurent exit road for vehicles
- All tanks that made it to the beach began to move towards the exit.
- The Village of St. Laurent would be the foremost objective.
- By mid-afternoon 5,000 more 1<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Division infantrymen headed towards the exit that had been cracked wide open.



George W. Gibbs




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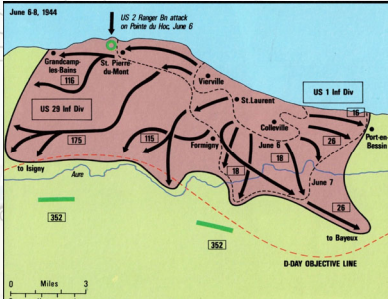

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY


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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (XVII)

- By mid-afternoon the German beach defenders faced a bleak choice—either hang on and hope for reinforcements or flee as soon as possible.
- If Americans could capture all three exits the German defenders options would be reduced to two: surrender or die.
- The American's captured St. Lauren around noon.
- Rommel's worst fears were realized. The Atlantic Wall had no depth—communications were in disarray. If the Allies could crack through there would be nothing to stop them inland.
- By late afternoon General Wyman reported that there was some semblance of order.
- Strong pockets of German resistance still survived in Colleville and Les Moulins and Cabourg. The Americans controlled Vierville.
- The enemy was stretched to its limit—no reinforcements were arriving.
- German walls build to stop the forward movement of troops crumbled when it was found out they were not reinforced with steel—a fatal mistake.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach (XVIII)

- The normal casualty ratio in battle is usually one killed to 7 wounded. On D-Day it was one-to-one.
- On Omaha no one had anticipated that medical units would have to cope with such a large number of wounded.
- The only alternative was to drag the wounded to a spot in the foot of the hills where they would be minimally shield from fire, and offer basic medical care.
- The longer a wounded soldier is denied steady medical care, the greater the chance of death.
- Darkness finally came and the beach was anything but tranquil.
- During the night the 1<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Divisions engaged in firefights throughout the night.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Omaha Beach—(XIX)—Conclusions

- The invasion plan had been based on several assumptions that had failed to materialize—nothing had really gone right:
  - The Air Force would pummel the beaches (they didn't)
  - The Germans were few and second-rate (they weren't—the 352<sup>nd</sup>)
  - Enemy beach obstacles would be cleared—(They weren't)
  - Landing waves would land on time on target—(they didn't)
  - Tanks would surprise and overwhelm defenses (many tanks sank)
  - The Omaha landing plan relied on 112 Sherman tanks scheduled to land with minutes of H-Hour which would overawe and demoralize the enemy's defenders. Many tanks never made it to the beach.
- Many more tanks were knocked out by the enemy.
- The men arriving 1<sup>st</sup> faced a higher casualty rate, many wounded.
- We lost 4,700 men on Omaha, many more may have died later.
- The situation at nightfall was confusing and hazardous




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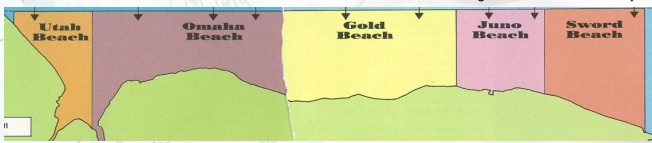
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

Omaha's violence greatly contrasted with Utah's relatively bloodless success.

What was going on with the other Beaches?

American 4 <sup>th</sup> Marines	American 29 <sup>th</sup> & 1 <sup>st</sup> Infantry	British 50 Infantry	Canadian 7 <sup>th</sup> Brigade	176 French British 3 <sup>rd</sup> Infantry
Utah Beach	Omaha Beach	Gold Beach	Juno Beach	Sword Beach




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Gold Beach

- Preliminary bombing started at 5:45 to last over an hour and a half.
- Wide enough to land two brigades side by side.
- With the sea running high, it was decided to land the DDay tanks directly from beached LCT's. This however placed them in ahead of the demolition parties and all tanks were shortly destroyed.
- The first troops of the British 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division were expected to land at 7:25 am, a few minutes behind the DDay tanks.
- Goal was to press inland to Bayeux.
- The bad D-Day weather seriously affected this plan. The fierce current made it likely tanks would sink.
- The troops hit the beach unsupported by armour, as the tanks got bogged down or were crippled by German fire.




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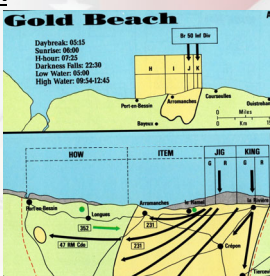
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Gold Beach—The Goal to take Bayeux

- The Germans had emplaced 2,500 obstacles, consisting of 900 tons of steel and concrete on a coastal front of three miles.
- It proved virtually impossible to clear lanes through these barriers until the tide went out.
- Many Allied landing craft were damaged or destroyed.
- It took two days and 200 casualties before the commandos could seize their objectives.
- By nightfall, the Gold lodgment area covered nearly five square miles, the division's reserves were ashore and the patrols were near the outskirts of Bayeux.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Juno (I)

- Also wide enough to land two brigades—the Canadian 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade was featured here.
- H-Hour was 7:45 am to give the rising tide time to cover part of the landing area.
- The tide and high wind delayed the landing even further.
- The current pushed the landing craft out of position.
- The heavy seas meant that people who should have been in front were behind.
- The later H-Hour caused it's own problems with the tide causing demolition teams not to get on shore.
- Heavy losses resulted, nearly 30 percent of all landing craft on Juno were destroyed or damaged.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### June (II)

- The fire of the German defense took the assaulting forces by surprise.
- Bitter fighting occurred but the town of Bernieres was in Canadian hands. Progress inland was good.

#### Juno Beach

D-Day: 0615  
 Beachhead: 0630  
 H-Hour: 07:35 — just back to 07:45  
 Darker: 08:30  
 Low Water: 08:00  
 High Water: 09:54-10:45

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Sword

- The landing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division at Sword and the goal to capture of Caen was the most important event in Montgomery's plan for D-Day.
- Coincided with the landing of Gold—at 7:25 am, this was a thin beach that only allowed one Brigade.
- The bad weather showed little sign of abating and reduced Sword to a narrow beach to a strip of sand only 10 yards from the seafront to the water.

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## THE STRATEGY OF

### Sword

- Leading the Sword assault were 176 French marines along with the British 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry.
- Words of Doon Campbell a correspondent:  
*"A few minutes ago, just after 9 am I landed in Hitler's Europe. I came ashore with the commandos who are thrust inland. On a huge scale the invasion is now well underway. Everywhere there are 1000's of men and hundreds of aircraft and ships—the Channel is full of ships: ships with guns blazing in ear-splitting bombardments. Ships smoking, a few sinking. Every minute more men and guns, tanks, vehicles and supplies are landing. The dead and the half-dead, first prisoners are taken. Our planes have dominated the skies. I'm staying behind in a ditch with the wounded to try and gain cover from German shells"*
- Soldiers at Sword had a tough time navigating the rolling seas.
- Forty amphibian tanks a mine clearers were launched 5,000 yards from offshore.
- An entire brigade was established onshore only 18 minutes later than scheduled.

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Sword

- For a moment it seemed that Caen was within the British grasp.
- But by mid-afternoon the German tanks and assault guns emerged northwards from Caen and kept the Allies from taking the city.
- Still as about 9:00 PM the German tank crews were astonished to see in the sky above them a force of over 250 British gliders which swept over their heads.
- The gliders demoralized the German survivors who had pulled back towards Caen.
- The German threat to Sword had ended but Caen was not captured.

### British Glider

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### This is What it Might have Looked Like on Sword

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Statistics on Gold, Juno, Sword

Gold	25,000 Landed
Juno	21,500 Landed
Sword	29,000 Landed

- 3,000 casualties were evenly spread between the 3 beaches.
- Of the German forces opposing them, 716 Static German Division had been virtually destroyed.
- 21st Panzer Division had taken serious losses.
- The landing had had it's problem but had succeeded.
- Germans would retreat and abandon Bayeux with fighting the next day.
- But Caen was still a battle yet to be decided.

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**By Nightfall**

- The British and Canadians were off all three of their Beaches and were moving inland on a front of about 20 miles.
- The average penetration inland was about 6 miles (only 1/4 of what had been planned).
- The position not completely secure but defensible.
- The chances of the Germans pushing the invasion back into the sea as Rommel had hoped were virtually gone.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**Eisenhower's view of the 1<sup>st</sup> Day**

- British, Canadian and American troops were established all along the 61 mile stretch of Coast.
- Even in the middle where the most heavily fought actions occurred, US V Corps had finally cracked the German defenses and moved to the bluffs above bloody Omaha beach.
- Caen had to be captured because the rolling open ground there was ideal tank country that offered a direct route to the Seine and Paris.
- Caen also was a small port which would help sustain an adequate supply to the armies.

**A Confident Eisenhower's Boasted to Churchill After a Few Days**

**"We'll be standing on the German frontier by winter."**




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**The German Situation**

- Germans were impressive in their fighting at Normandy. But, they were greatly outnumbered.
- The Allies were superior in every category.
- Hitler ordered his troops to stand and fight in Normandy.
- It took time but the American forces started to ravage the German Divisions.
- The months after the landings the Germans had only 120 of 1300 tanks and assault guns left. They had lost more than 15,000 vehicles.
- Overwhelming air superiority, overwhelming artillery firepower helped the Allies.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Luftwaffe Reply

- Initial Allied landings came as a complete surprise to the Luftwaffe.
- No German reconnaissance aircraft reported the approach of the armada.
- Initially there was no reaction from the defenses.
- Even when the Luftwaffe had firm evidence that the landings had begun, the powerful defensive umbrella prevented it from mounting effective air attacks.
- During one attempt to get German aircraft in the air the 355 Fighter group intercepted and shot down 9 planes and forced the rest to return home.
- Twenty-one US and seven British transport aircraft were lost.

German Messerschmitt




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Logistical Plan Problems Develop

- Problems arose almost immediately.
- Germans had destroyed much of Cherbourg and it was only handling about 2000 tons a day by July 16.
- Engineers had to work to develop landing beaches instead of ports. By the end of June beaches were handling nearly 100% of the incoming supplies.
- Weather and other problems by D+15 caused the cumulative volume of supply to reach only 61% of what was planned. One of the major landing areas Mulberry A was destroyed by weather causing many ships to be beached.
- Ports had to be built by the Allies
- Ammunition began to be in short supply.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Normandy Battleground on June 10

(4 Days After)

- By June 10, the Allied forces had established and secured a firm place in Normandy.
- The assault beaches were connected by a continuous perimeter.
- Rommel's plan was to contain the landing forces on the beaches with his fortified positions and destroy them between the tidelines—it had failed.
- Hitler vastly under-estimated the Allies plan and was resistant to release the mobile reserve forces that von Rundstedt wanted to launch a counteroffensive.
- All the Germans could try and do was defend.
- The Germans did not withdraw from the Beaches as Hitler insisted that the soldiers defend every inch of ground and die in position.
- This slowed the Allies down especially in the Allied efforts to take Caen.




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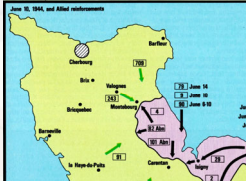
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Normandy Battleground (Cherbourg)

- The attack on Cherbourg had a depressing effect on the morale of the German Army in Normandy.
- It was a GREAT port, very strongly fortified by the Germans.
- It had surrendered against the express orders of the Fuhrer.
- The Americans felt Euphoria and relief. General Bradley, without the defeat of Cherbourg could not turn his full attention to the breakout operation through France.
- Bradley commented to the troops,  
*"You men should consider yourselves lucky and are to be congratulated. You have ring-side seats at the Greatest Show on earth".*



June 18, 1944, and Allied reinforcements

General Omar Bradley,  
General of the US Army

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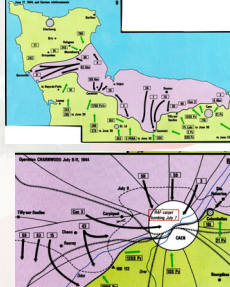
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Normandy Battleground -Caen

- Montgomery had failed to take Caen on D-Day and made two other fruitless attempts.
- He decided that the British Second Army must storm it.
- The main attack on Caen (Operation Charnwood) was made on July 8. It started with a massive bombing raid on the evening of July 7. This was led by an air raid of 2,000 aircraft attempting to destroy all enemy positions.
- The sheer damage caused by the air raid, so much destruction caused the Caen offensive to be slowed down. By July 8 the Allies had reached the center of the city. On July 18, 7,000 tons of bombs were dropped.
- The German resistance was strong, but their forces had started to become demoralized.
- Caen falls on July 20, 1944.



Operation Charnwood July 8, 1944

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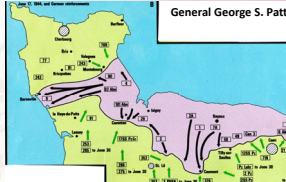
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Breakout

- For nearly a month, the American First Army's advance south had been stalled in vicious infantry fighting.
- St. Lo -Constances Road seemed to be the most promising area where the German front could be best attacked. St. Lo was heavily defended by the Germans.
- The Allies attacked St. Lo on July 3 and 4<sup>th</sup>. They faced strong counterattacks by the Germans. On July 11, the battle went into the city.
- Operation Cobra an offensive to exploit St. Lo began on July 25 with a massive air bombardment of over 2,246 aircraft.
- By July 30, General George Patton had taken command of the V-Corps. The Allies took St.Lo and the road and the western side of the front began to crumble.



General George S. Patton

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY



Knocked Out Tanks, and Vehicles by the Side of the Road was a Common Occurrence

Allied Troops Were Routinely Supported As They Passed Through French Towns



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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### July 22—Attempted Assassination of Hitler

- Supreme Allied Headquarters reports an assassination attempt on Hitler.
- Details of the attack were lacking but it appears that it was the Army itself that tried to take power from Hitler.
- The Army had decided it must try and save something from defeat. How else to save the German Army than to kill Hitler?
- Later it was determined that Claus von Stauffenberg, a German Army Officer had executed the attempt, 4 killed, 13 injured. He died in the attempt.
- The Big Question...was Rommel involved?



**SUPREME HEADQUARTERS**  
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-8

**WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**  
No. 18

Week Ending  
July 22, 1944  
PART 1/A.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**ENEMY CAPABILITIES**

[The assassination attempt on Hitler] That a "military clique", as BESSIER calls them, should have been plotting to liquidate him is encouraging; that they should have chosen this moment is exhilarating. Details of the attempted coup de main are lacking; but the very fact that the plotters reckoned that the time was ripe for a venture so complicated as the assassination of the Führer argues that they had good reason to hope for success not only in the first phase but also in the latter ones. Exactly who is implicated, apart from

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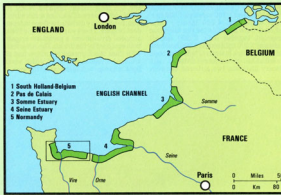
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Early August 1944—Two Months In

- By Early August the German commanders in France realized that the game was up and were convinced that only a withdrawal to the Seine could save them.
- The Allies had a great superiority of numbers and material and they could prevent German reserves and supplies from moving in.
- Hitler disagreed with his chain of command and ordered all his Panzer Divisions remaining to assemble in Normandy.
- The Panzer Divisions attacked on August 7.
- On August 8, Allied tactical aircraft slaughtered the tanks and half-tracks of the Panzer Army as it struggled to move westward.
- By August 8 it was obvious to the German Commanders that the Normandy counteroffensive had failed.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### The Breakout III--Falaise

- On August 16, the British Second Army and the Canadians captured Falaise.
- On August 19, Hitler authorized the withdrawal to a new defensive line towards the Seine.
- The Falaise pocket that was taken completed the ruin of the Germany Army in Normandy.
- The Allies took 50,000 prisoners and estimated they had destroyed 5,000 armored vehicles and tanks in the area.
- German casualties had exceeded 400,000 men in the campaign and the Germans were in full retreat.




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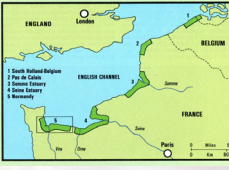
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Pursuit of the Seine

- Montgomery had "coordinating authority" over all Army Groups including Patton and Bradley. This included 38 divisions, but American commanders were looking forward to Eisenhower establishing control on the continent of the allied armies.
- The German front was collapsing with an established defense in depth—the total defeat of the German armies appeared possible.
- Supplies were slowing up the chance of quick success. As divisions quickly advanced, the long-term forward "dumping" of supplies became almost impossible.
- Patton became more influential as he now commanded 9 of Bradley's 21 divisions.
- Patton's genius was in seizing the moment.
- His boldness and skill in operational maneuver was unmatched by any Allied commander. But like Montgomery, Patton has his rough edges, very rough edges.




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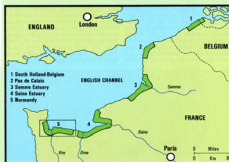
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Pursuit of the Seine

- Patton had some embarrassing moments (he was accused of slapping a soldier).
- The Allied goal to retake Paris had always been D + 90 (Sept. 6).
- But the mathematics of supply spelled out a problem for the allies. Planners believed that Paris would consume at least 4,000 tons of supplies per day.
- For 1500 days (4 years) Parisians had borne the shame, terror and despair that had come with German occupation. For them the success of an invasion would show that the Parisiens would be very involved.
- On August 13 the Germans began disarming Paris' 20,000 policemen because they had gone on strike.
- The Policemen met and issued a proclamation saying the police would stand with the Parisienne Resistance.
- Resistance elements prepared to seize the city.
- Hitler's new commander in Paris issued Hitler's order to destroy Paris, "saying *"Paris will not fall into allied hands unscathed"*.




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**Pursuit of the Seine**

- On August 19<sup>th</sup> the Resistance planned to rise under the leadership of the French Communist Henri Tanguy.
- Two thousand police in civilian clothes assembled near Notre Dame. Soon they took the Palais de Justice nearby and then the Boulevard du Palais.
- The next day the Hotel de Ville fell.
- 22,000 German troops and 50 tanks were still in Paris.
- On August 22, Paris was an open battlefield of three dozen miniature war zones.
- Late on August 22 Eisenhower ordered Bradley to move on Paris.
- The Germans set the Grand Palais of Paris on Fire.
- The August 24<sup>th</sup>, three quarters of the city was occupied by freedom fighters. Eisenhower ordered that a French Armored Division would be the first Division to enter Paris.
- On August 25, the Germans surrendered Paris.

The French Resistance




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**


**Pursuit of the Seine**

- Charles de Gaulle entered the city on August 26 to proclaim his government without Allied sponsorship.
- On August 27 Eisenhower and Bradley arrived in the city and on August 29, the US 28<sup>th</sup> Division made a triumphal March through Paris.

The Infantry parades triumphantly along the Champs Elysees on August 9.



Degaule(L) prepares to enter Paris. Degaule headed two provisional French Governments until 1946 (and then later 1958-1969).




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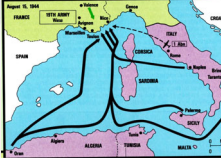
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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

**The Invasion of Southern France--Dragoon**

- Both Roosevelt and Churchill agreed that the Allies could not conduct an invasion of Normandy and the French Riviera at the same time.
- They hoped to invade the Riviera and the Mediterranean by August. This attack was code-named Dragoon.
- Rommel had taken a look at his Mediterranean forces in May 1944 and found a shockingly thin shell of coastal fortifications. He dispatched 14,000 laborers to build 600 camouflaged gun positions on the Southern Beaches of France. Rommel was being forced to shift troops North.
- He still had 30,000 troops guarding the Riviera with another 200,000 within reach.
- The Dragoon plan—centered on an August 15<sup>th</sup> date called for major landings over the Camel beaches near Ste. Maxime in the Center and St. Tropez and Cavalaire in the south.
- Air Power formed a critical element of Dragoon.
- Dragoon like Overlord, called for pre-dawn airborne landings.
- Allied intelligence again paid off when Allied officers uncovered a huge map that covered the Riviera coast from Cannes to Toulon showing all the bunkers, artillery positions and their fields of fire.
- Bingo!




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Dragoon

- Began on August 15 with an airborne assault.
- Paratroopers jumped about 4:30 am—and were hit with dis-orienting fog.
- Minefields and obstacles on the Riviera beaches presented challenges.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division was able to seize the beaches, while aerial and naval bombardment neutralized the strong German Defense.
- On August 16, D + 1, the Allies consolidated their grip on the Riviera beachhead.
- By August 17 more than 86,500 American and French troops had landed, along with 12,500 vehicles and 46,100 tons of cargo.
- During the month of August over 380,000 crossed the Dragoon beaches.
- The Germans did fight launching 141 sorties by Junkers and other fliers. We took several damages.
- On August 28<sup>th</sup> Toulon had fallen and the German Marseilles garrison had surrendered. Dragoon had been a huge success.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### Dragoon



Dragoon was made more difficult as the Germans used French naval guns to defend Marseilles and the Riviera



Before the Germans capitulated in Marseilles they scuttled ships and left them submerged in difficult positions to make the Allied job harder.

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## THE STRATEGY OF

### The Invasion of Southern France--Continues

- Now the goal was to move with speed northward to Grenoble
- The 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division captured Grenoble on August 22, 1944
- Next was Battle for Montelimar—where the German force was strong. The Germans knew the Allies were coming and sent a Panzer unit which got their first.
- Airstrikes destroyed 2,000 trucks, 80 artillery pieces and 5 railroad guns.
- The battle around Montelimar took time as the Allies suffered from some supply problems. But the third division mopped up around Montelimar and the Germans surrendered there on August 29.
- While fearing a heavy fight for Lyon The Germans retreated and the Allies took Lyon on September 3.
- On September 12 The allies took Dijon and thus established a single front from the English Channel to Switzerland as they closed in on Germany.




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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### After France

- Montgomery's campaign focused on the final Overlord objective.
- Taking the industrial routes, and use allied armies in France to go through Belgium entering Germany north of the Ardennes.
- Montgomery's stock had fallen in many circles and the American public demanded a change.
- US Chief of Staff General Marshall urged Eisenhower to take Control.
- Eisenhower assumed ground command at the end of August.
- Eisenhower made the decision the Allies must let supplies catch up before going into Germany as 40 Divisions were involved in the effort. This made Patton fume with anger as Patton claimed "He could be in Germany in ten days." (The drama that Patton caused with the other leaders can not be overstated).
- Eisenhower finally approved Montgomery's plan to thrust to the Rhine in Mid-September 1944. By September 10, Belgium and Luxembourg were FREE.

Patton meets with Gen. Omar Bradley and Sir Bernard Montgomery

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### After France

- Most Historians view September 1 as the date that Project Overlord's objectives were met. This would be D+ 87.
- By September the Allies had suffered 210,000 casualties (killed/wounded/missing) including 37,000 dead (4,700 on Omaha).
- 38 Allied divisions were on the continent facing 33 German divisions.
- German casualties were estimated between 200,000 (no official death totals). Also, 200,000 German prisoners taken by the Allied Troops.
- Normandy was the essential starting-point on the road to liberation.
- Within a year of the invasion, Nazi Germany was smashed and Western Europe was free.
- Germany officially surrender to the Allies on May 7, 1945.
- Without Project Overlord, the strategic bombing, the Allied navies and merchant marine and the campaigns in the Mediterranean this victory would never have been possible.

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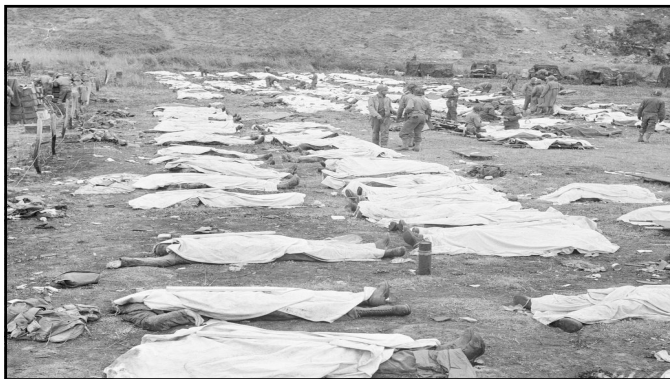
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Southampton  
50° DIV BR.

## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY



St. Laurent Cemetery--9000 Buried There




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Southampton  
50° DIV BR.


## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### After France

- In 1944, Rommel was implicated in the 20 July plot to assassinate Hitler. Due to Rommel's status as a national hero, Hitler desired to eliminate him quietly instead of immediately executing him, as many other plotters were. Rommel was given a choice between committing suicide, in return for assurances that his reputation would remain intact and that his family would not be persecuted following his death, or facing a trial that would result in his disgrace and execution; he chose the former and committed suicide using a cyanide pill. Rommel was given a state funeral, and it was announced that he had succumbed to his injuries from the accident of his staff car in Normandy.



Rommel




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Southampton  
50° DIV BR.

## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

### After France

- April 30, 1945, Der Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler, dictator of Germany, burrowed away in a refurbished air-raid shelter, consumes a cyanide capsule, then shoots himself with a pistol, on this day in 1945, as his "1,000-year" Reich collapses above him.





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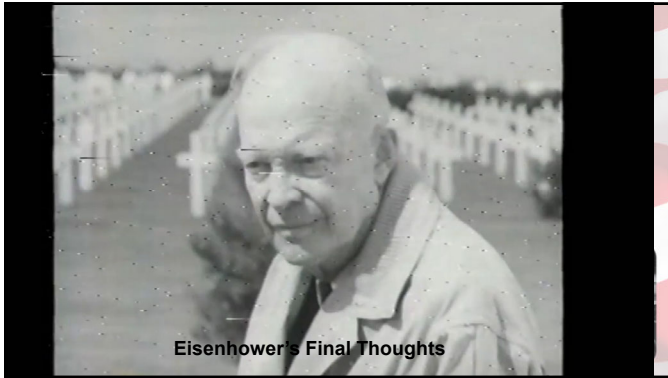
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## THE STRATEGY OF

**Eisenhower's Note Accepting Full Responsibility Was Written In Advance in Case of Failure...**

"Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone."

-July 5, Dwight D. Eisenhower

*Our landings in the Cherbourg - Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.*

*July 5*

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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

V-E Day, or Victory in Europe Day as it is otherwise known, is a holiday which is observed on May 8th all over the world. In 1945.

It was celebrated as a public holiday in the United States and was celebrated to rejoice in the formal acceptance of surrender the Allies received from Nazi Germany on May 7th, 1945.

Although it currently hasn't been observed since 1945 in the U.S, many countries around the world still observe it.

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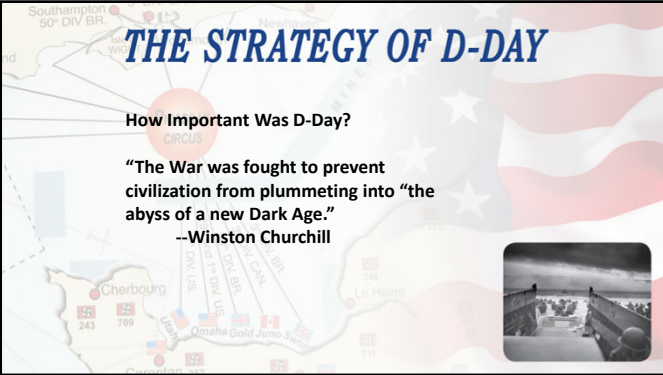
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**How Important Was D-Day?**

**"The War was fought to prevent civilization from plummeting into "the abyss of a new Dark Age."  
--Winston Churchill**




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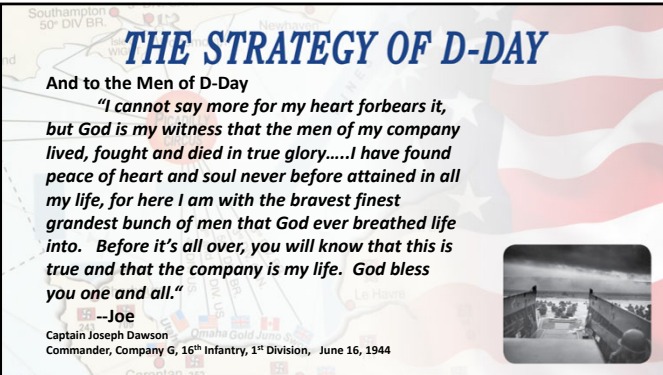
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## THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY

**And to the Men of D-Day**

***"I cannot say more for my heart forbears it, but God is my witness that the men of my company lived, fought and died in true glory.....I have found peace of heart and soul never before attained in all my life, for here I am with the bravest finest grandest bunch of men that God ever breathed life into. Before it's all over, you will know that this is true and that the company is my life. God bless you one and all."***

**--Joe**  
Captain Joseph Dawson  
 Commander, Company G, 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Division, June 16, 1944




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**THE STRATEGY OF D-DAY**

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