

MASSACHUSETTS VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERIES

D-DAY 80th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

NEWSLETTER

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Image source: Wikipedia

ABOUT D-DAY

The Normandy landings were the landing operations and associated airborne operations on Tuesday, 6 June 1944, of the Allied invasion of Normandy in Operation Overlord during World War II. Codenamed Operation Neptune and often referred to as D-Day, it is the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation began the liberation of France and the rest of Western Europe and laid the foundations for Allied victory on the Western Front.

Planning for the operation began in 1943. In the months leading up to the invasion, the Allies conducted a substantial military deception, codenamed Operation Bodyguard, to mislead the Germans as to the date and location of the main Allied landings. The weather on the day selected for D-Day was not ideal, and the operation had to be delayed 24 hours; a further postponement would have meant a delay of at least two weeks, as the planners had requirements for the phase of the moon, the tides, and time of day, that meant only a few days each month were deemed suitable. Adolf Hitler placed Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in command of German forces and developed fortifications along the Atlantic Wall in anticipation of an invasion. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt placed Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower in command of Allied forces.

The invasion began shortly after midnight on the morning of June the 6th with extensive aerial and naval bombardment as well as an airborne assault—the landing of 24,000 American, British, and Canadian airborne troops. The early morning aerial assault was soon followed by Allied amphibious landings on the coast of France ca. 06:30 AM. The target 50-mile (80 km) stretch of the Normandy coast was divided into five sectors: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Strong winds blew the landing craft east of their intended positions, particularly at Utah and Omaha.

SOURCE: Wikipedia

CONTACT

AGAWAM:

Address: 1390 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts 01001 111
Phone: (413) 821-9500 Fax: (413) 821-9839
Email: MVMCAgawam@mass.gov

WINCHENDON:

Address: Glenallen Street, Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475
Phone: (978) 297-9501 Fax: (978) 297-4271
Email: MVMCWinchendon@mass.gov

EVENTS



AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY AT NORMANDY AMERICAN CEMETERY

June 6, 2024, will mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings along the Normandy coast during World War II. This event, which ultimately led to the liberation of Europe, will be commemorated at Normandy American Cemetery.

Visit: www.abmc.gov/d-day80 for more information and to join the live stream

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FROM THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM NEW ORLEANS:

NATIONAL WW2 MUSEUM D-DAY FACT SHEET

Invasion Date
June 6, 1944

The Invasion Area

The Allied code names for the beaches along the 50-mile stretch of Normandy coast targeted for landing were Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Omaha was the costliest beach in terms of Allied casualties.

Allied Forces

Nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed on D-Day, made up of major forces from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and 12 other Allied nations. Some 23,400 airborne troops jumped into Normandy from 822 aircraft and gliders. Over 34,000 Americans came ashore at Omaha alone on June 6.

Casualties

The Allies suffered over 10,300 total casualties (killed, wounded, or missing), of which approximately 2,400 were on Omaha Beach.

The Armada

Over 7,000 naval vessels, including 4,000 landing craft and 1,200 warships. About 12,000 aircraft supported the invasion.

The Commanders

United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Omar Bradley
United Kingdom: Bernard Law Montgomery, Trafford Leigh-Mallory, Arthur Tedder, Miles Dempsey, Bertram Ramsay
Germany: Erwin Rommel, Gerd von Rundstedt, Friedrich Dollmann

The Outcome

By the end of June, the Allies had landed more than 850,000 troops, 570,000 tons of supplies, and nearly 150,000 vehicles across the beaches of Normandy. There would be months of hard fighting in Europe before the Nazis finally surrendered in May 1945, but the D-Day invasion gave the Allies the success they needed to initiate the campaigns that would lead to the liberation of occupied Europe.

A NOTE ON NUMBERS:

It is important to note that many of the numbers associated with D-Day assault forces and their casualties are approximations, and some sources vary widely. As Stephen Ambrose observed, "No exact figures are possible, either for the number of men landed or for casualties, for D-Day alone." (Ambrose, 576n)

In the US Army's official history, Cross-Channel Attack, Gordon Harrison noted that the various numbers of American soldiers killed are estimations since not all the reports agree. Concerning the number of just those killed on Omaha Beach, not to mention those wounded, Harrison assessed: "Under the Army's present casualty reporting system, it is unlikely that accurate figures of D-Day losses by the unit will ever be available. The V Corps History gives D-Day losses as 2,374, of which the 1st Division lost 1,190, the 29th Division 743, and corps troops 441. The after-action report of the 1st Division and the 29th Division history both scale down their own losses slightly." (Harrison, 330)

SOME SOURCES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION:

Ambrose, Stephen E. D-Day June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

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Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, World War II: D-Day, The Invasion of Normandy. <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/world-war-ii-d-day-invasion-normandy>.

Harrison, Gordon A. Cross-Channel Attack. Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1993

Symonds, Craig L. Neptune: The Allied Invasion of Europe and the D-Day Landings. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

U.S. Army Center of Military History, U.S. Army Campaigns in World War II: Normandy.

<https://history.army.mil/brochures/normandy/nor-pam.htm>

U.S. Department of Defense. D-Day: The Beaches. (2016) https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/2016/0516_dday/docs/d-day-fact-sheet-the-beaches.pdf

MAY THOSE WHO PERISHED DURING THE D-DAY INVASION AND ALL OUR FALLEN VETERANS REST IN PEACE

THE MASSACHUSETTS VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERIES ARE DEDICATED TO THE COMMONWEALTH'S VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES AS A LASTING MEMORIAL AND FINAL RESTING PLACE IN APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE FOR THEIR SERVICE AND SACRIFICE TO OUR NATION.