

D-Day and the Battle of Normandy



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Early on 6th June 1944 off the coast of German-occupied France, lay an armada of more than 7,000 naval vessels.

Above them in the skies that day would pass thousands of aircraft on more than 14,000 sorties, bombing targets and dropping or landing some 24,000 airborne personnel behind enemy lines. Their mission: to capture key bridges, neutralise coastal batteries and secure vital roads ahead of the main landings.

Shortly after dawn, and under cover of a massive naval bombardment, the first waves of assaulting infantry made for five designated beaches, codenamed Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha and Utah, along a 50-mile stretch of Normandy coastline. In many places the defenders were waiting, and exacted a horrific toll on the allies as they came ashore. But, backed by years of meticulous planning and with great determination, they fought on. They ultimately breached Hitler's famed 'Atlantic Wall' and gained a foothold in 'Fortress Europe'.

As a champion of Remembrance, the Royal British Legion pays tribute to the D-Day Generation by telling their stories. To find out more scan the QR code.



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By the end of that first day, over 130,000 personnel representing 13 nations had come ashore, united in the aim of liberating western Europe. That success came at a terrible cost. All told, the allies suffered 10,000 casualties in the skies, seas and on the beaches of Normandy on 6th June alone; with 4,400 making the ultimate sacrifice.

But D-Day was only the beginning. For the next three months of 'Operation Overlord', the fighting would rage in the towns, villages and the infamous hedgerows of Northern France, as the allies forced the Germans through, and eventually beyond, Normandy. It was a fight for liberation that would involve more than two million allied personnel, 10 percent of whom would become casualties, with 72,000 making the ultimate sacrifice. Hard fought, and costly, the Battle of Normandy was a decisive victory which paved the way to end the Second World War in Europe.



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