

World War II: D-Day, The Invasion of Normandy

The D-Day operation of June 6, 1944 brought together the land, air and sea forces of the allied armies in what became known as the largest invasion force in human history. The operation, given the codename OVERLORD, delivered five naval assault divisions to the beaches of Normandy, France. The beaches were given the code names UTAH, OMAHA, GOLD, JUNO and SWORD. The invasion force included 7,000 ships and landing craft manned by over 195,000 naval personnel from eight allied countries. Almost 133,000 troops from England, Canada and the United States landed on D-Day. Casualties from the three countries during the landing numbered 10,300. By June 30th, over 850,000 men, 148,000 vehicles, and 570,000 tons of supplies had landed on the Normandy shores. Fighting by the brave soldiers, sailors and airmen of the allied forces western front, and Russian forces on the eastern front, led to the defeat of German Nazi forces. On May 7, 1945, German General Alfred Jodl signed an unconditional surrender at Reims, France.

Order of the Day, June 6, 1944

General Eisenhower's determination that operation OVERLORD (the invasion of France) would bring a quick end to the war is obvious in this message to the troops of the Allied Expeditionary Forces on June 6, 1944, the morning of the invasion.

"Order of the Day" - statement as issued to the soldiers, sailors and airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force on June 6, 1944 [Museum Manuscripts transferred to the Library FY69, Box 1; NAID #12000995]

"Order of the Day" - draft of statement [Ray W. Barker Papers, 1942-46, Box 1, Papers Pertaining to COSSAC and SHAEF, 1942-1945 (1); NAID #12010107]

In Case of Failure of the D-Day Operation

Following the decision for the cross channel invasion, General Eisenhower wrote a press release on a pad of paper, to be used if necessary. The handwritten message by General Eisenhower, the "In Case of Failure message," is mistakenly dated "July" 5 instead of "June" 5.

In Case of Failure Message [Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers, Principal File, Box 168, Butcher Diary June 28 - July 14, 1944 (2); NAID #186470]

Prelude to Operation Overlord

The Trident Conference, May 1943 [Combined Chiefs of Staff: Conference Proceedings, Box 2, Trident Conference May 1943 Papers and Minutes of Meetings; NAID #12005142]

The Quadrant Conference, August 1943 [Combined Chiefs of Staff: Conference Proceedings, Box 2, Quadrant Conference August 1943 Papers and Minutes of Meetings; NAID #12005143]

Harry Butcher, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, Diary Entry, October 5, 1943 [Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers, Principal File, Box 167, Diary-Butcher Oct. 1 - Dec. 30 1943 (1); NAID #12004922]

The Sextant and Eureka Conferences, November-December 1943 [Combined Chiefs of Staff: Conference Proceedings, Box 2, Sextant Conference November-December 1943 Papers and Minutes of Meetings; NAID #12005144]

Handwritten note from President Roosevelt to Marshal Stalin appointing General Eisenhower to command Operation Overlord. General George Marshall added a note to Eisenhower on December 7, 1943 [Copy on display in Eisenhower Museum]

Overlord - Anvil Papers, December 1943 - April 1944 Part 1 [Walter Bedell Smith Collection of World War II Documents, Box 21, Overlord-Anvil Paper (1); NAID #12009137]

Overlord - Anvil Papers, December 1943 - April 1944 Part 2 [Walter Bedell Smith Collection of World War II Documents, Box 21, Overlord-Anvil Paper (6); NAID #12005073]

Operation Policy Memoranda, January 29, 1944 [DDE's Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 136, Conferences Supreme Commanders (Jan-June 1944); NAID #12005223]

British Assault Area - Naval Operation Orders, May 15, 1944 [Walter Bedell Smith Collection of World War II Documents, Box 48, British Assault Area - Naval Operation Orders Operation Neptune (1); NAID #12004565]