

Opinion

Operation Overlord... The Normandy Invasion!

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Saturday, June 6, 2026, will mark the 82nd anniversary of *Operation Overlord*, the landing of Allied Forces on Normandy Beach in France in 1944. The largest single invasion in the history of mankind involved hundreds of ships, thousands of aircraft, and millions of men. It would prove to be the strike that ultimately would cause the Axis Armies to lose any hope they might have had in winning World War II! More than 600,000 casualties, dead and wounded, would result from the unprecedented battle involving a host of nations.

For almost a decade before D-Day in Normandy, Dictator Adolf Hitler had pushed his German Armies north to Scandinavia, east to Russia, and south to France, with Italy on their side, and west to the English Channel. He had devastated or captured country after country. His raids with aircraft and V-2 Rockets had demolished a great portion of England's infrastructure! The Allied convoys of men and materials traversing the Atlantic had suffered brutal attacks by German U-Boats; and, the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and other locations had declared annihilation to the Jewish Race! Millions in every sector of Europe were blown to bits, or executed without mercy. In early 1944, the Germans had constructed an almost impregnable defense along the western coast of Europe. It was time for an extreme move by the Allied Forces!

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, meeting with counterparts of Russia, Canada and England, laid the groundwork for a general invasion of the European mainland. The various and diversified details would be directed by the Training and Operational Commands... all of which would require

the most diligent of minds and expertise. Many months before deployment of troops, mock maneuvers and landings were practiced in the Chesapeake Bay area, on the Eastern coast of America. The fine tuning of strategic vessels and weapons were programmed. In February of 1944, a constant stream of convoys, battling the seas and the enemy, afloat and in the air, made their way across the 2,000 miles of open sea. In England, the Training would continue... all eagerly awaiting the call to embark on a mission that would claim countless lives.

The down payment on our Freedoms would run very high. General Dwight Eisenhower was named Supreme Commander of all Allied Forces for this gigantic Mission; and, his expertise would prove to be successful. Sustained bombing raids on numerous German installations were now being conducted around the clock; and, the countdown for departure to the battlefield was at hand.

On the night of June 5, the signal was given, and thousands of ships and aircrafts commenced the trek for the shores of France. In the early hours of June 6th, Naval guns from Battleships, Cruisers, and Destroyers began bombardments of coastal sectors. Coast Guard vessels, and hospital ships circled the area; ready for rescue work and treatment of the wounded. Thousands of paratroopers and infantrymen poured into the inland areas and beaches! The most stringent perils of war were being realized. It was going to be a Very Long Day! The picture was bleak, and the cost was great, but the conquering force moved ahead; realizing the alternative would lend only to anarchy and slavery!

The white crosses which remain are grim reminders of the price of liberty! Our hearts are extended to the survivors and their families; and, our prayer is that such a conflict will never again be necessary!

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