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Operation Overlord: The Invasion of Northwest Europe

By Anita Venegas



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invasion. However, planning it took nearly two years of coordination between the Allies: America, France, Britain, and Canada.

World War II began when Adolf Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Hitler then attacked Norway, Britain, Denmark, France, and others. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. President Roosevelt declared war the next

Europe.

Hitler expected Americans to attack Europe's west coast. His army built the Atlantic Wall all the way from Norway to Spain. They built concrete bunkers and shelters for heavy artillery and anti-aircraft weapons. Most villagers were forced from their homes while German soldiers moved in. The Germans promised to free the captured citizens if they helped build. Many of the

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French quietly resisted by building weak bunkers.

The English Channel kept land troops from crossing in or out of Britain. The Germans expected the British to attack the closest point: the Pas-de-Calais. The Allies built a fake military base across the channel from it, near Dover. They built dummy aircraft and ships from metal tubes, canvas, and empty



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shallow. They are better suited to wheeled vehicles than boats. Still, more than 5,000 ships were used on D-Day. The British used an artificial harbor off the coast of Gold Beach. They built it in secret by sinking pieces of it off their own coast. They towed the pieces where they needed to go before raising them.

The Allies planned the attack by air, land, and sea for June 5, 1944. Cloud cover delayed the attack

of the sky or drowned in flooded marshlands. One paratrooper's chute got caught on a church steeple! He pretended to be dead for two hours until he could escape.

Americans were the first to land on the beaches of Utah and Omaha at 6:30 a.m. Allied troops landed a bit later on Gold, Juno, and Sword. The attacked coastline stretched for 50 miles (80 km). All troops met with heavy German

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defense. Still, by nightfall the Allies had pushed the German troops six miles inland (about 10 km).

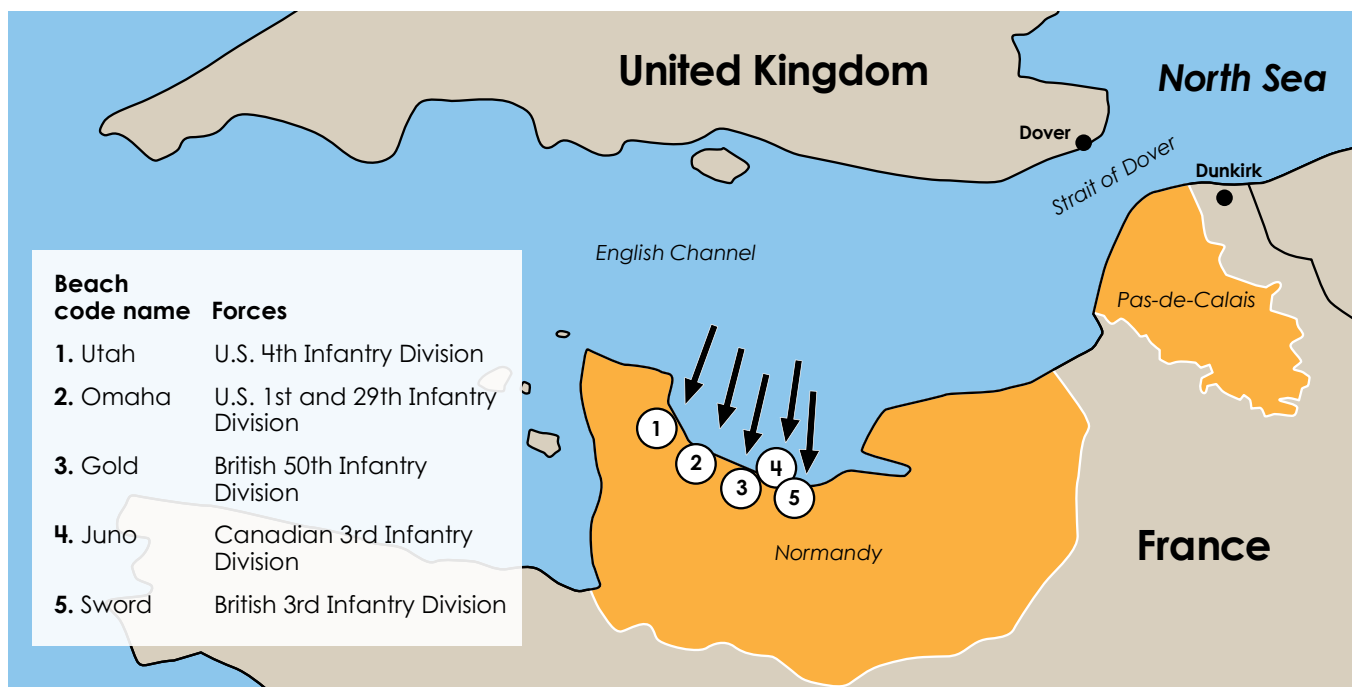
It was the beginning of the end for Hitler. With troops fighting on two fronts—the USSR and Europe—he didn't have enough soldiers to hold the line in France. Hundreds of thousands of Allied troops continued to fight and push Hitler's troops farther east. They crossed the River Seine on August 19, 1944. Germans fully fell back over the river on August 30. That marked the end of the operation.

Hitler and the Nazi army



dummy landing craft used as decoys in southeastern U.K. harbors

continued to fight, with few successes. In the end, France and the rest of Europe were liberated. World War II ended on May 8, 1945.



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1. Normandy is located in which country?
 - a. Great Britain
 - b. Norway
 - c. Germany
 - d. France
2. Why is building weak bunkers considered "quietly resisting"?



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4. Write *true* or *false* for each statement.
 - _____ Churchill liked the eventual outcome of Pearl Harbor.
 - _____ Americans led the charge on three Normandy beaches.
 - _____ The Allies needed cloud cover to hide the D-Day invasion.
 - _____ Fighting in the USSR had a positive effect on Allies in Europe.
 - _____ D-Day was the beginning and end of the Battle of Normandy.
5. Why would the British take the time to set up a dummy base and run dummy military trainings near Dover?

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The following terms are vocabulary words from the article. Match the vocabulary word with its correct definition by writing the corresponding letter on the line.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. ____ artillery | a. soldiers trained to leap from planes |
| 2. ____ invasion | b. organized group planning |



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fully below ground

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 6. ____ liberate | f. tower-like part of a building with a sharply pointed roof |
| 7. ____ coordination | g. to free, especially from foreign control |
| 8. ____ steeple | h. unwanted, often forceful entry |
| 9. ____ artificial | i. manmade; not natural |
| 10. ____ declared | j. weapons that shoot, especially big firearms |

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Operation Overlord



In the article, "Operation Overlord: The Invasion of Northwest Europe," you read about the planning of D-Day, a turning point in WWII.

Other turning points include the Battle of Stalingrad, Battle of Midway, and Second Battle of El Alamein. Research one using the internet, then tell about it on the lines below. Include when and where it happened, who was fighting, and why it is considered a turning point. On the back of this page, write the address(es) for the website(s) you used for your research.

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ANSWER KEY

Operation Overlord

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1. Normandy is located in which country?
- a. Great Britain b. Norway



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2. Why would the British take the time to set up a dummy base and run dummy military trainings near Dover?

Answers may vary. An example is: If the Germans thought the Allies were going to attack Pas-de-Calais, they might let down their guard on other beaches.

ANSWER KEY

Operation Overlord

The following terms are vocabulary words from the article. Match the vocabulary word with its correct definition by writing the corresponding letter on the line.



1. j artillery

a. soldiers trained

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10. c declared

j. weapons that shoot, especially big firearms