



0. Normandy Invasion - Story Preface

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Photograph of General Dwight David Eisenhower taken on December 31, 1943 (the day he was named to command Allied forces in Europe). Note the "SHAEF" (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) patch on his left shoulder. Photograph from the Army Signal Corps Collection in the U.S. National Archives. Image: USA C-2175. Public Domain

OK, let's go.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower
Order to Proceed with Normandy Invasion

The phase of the moon (full) and the level of the tide (three hours past its ebb) would dictate the invasion's start.

For a few days each month those conditions were possible. A full moon would provide sufficient light. The tide had to be low enough to allow those manning the landing crafts to see German-placed obstacles on the French shore but high enough for troops to avoid too much unprotected beach.

The best day in June, 1944, was the 5th - a Monday.

But would the weather cooperate?

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Normandy-Invasion)
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Questions 2 Ponder

What Is It Like to Stake It All on the Weather?

A few days after D-Day, Allied ships and troops delivered supplies to the Normandy beaches. Within two weeks, the weather along the Normandy coastline would turn extremely bad. This photo, taken by an unnamed US Coast Guard combat photographer, depicts the scene on or about June 9, 1944.

The photo's original caption states: "Supplies Pour Ashore for Invaders of France - This striking panorama of the

French invasion beach was made by a Coast Guard combat photographer from a hillside cut with the trench (foreground) of the ousted Nazi defenders. The channel waters are black with shipping, as reinforcements and supplies are funneled ashore for the conquest of the Cherbourg Peninsula. Balloon barrages float overhead to protect the ships from low-flying enemy strafers. One balloon rests on the deck of an LST. Headed inland are long parades of trucks, loaded with troops and supplies." Image online via the US National Archives; National Archives / ARC Identifier 12003973. Click on the image for a better view.

For a few days each month, conditions are right for Allied ships and men to leave England for Normandy. But it is the weather which matters most for this dangerous, cross-channel attack.

On the day conditions are best for an amphibious landing, the weather looks bad. Really bad. So bad that it is too risky for the ships and men to leave Britain.

Yet - the conditions of the Moon and the tide are right.

If the weather breaks, and the skies are clear, a full moon will provide sufficient light. The tide will be low-enough to allow men, who are manning the landing crafts, to see German-placed obstacles on the French shore but high-enough for troops to avoid too much unprotected beach.

What do you think it must have been like for the thousands of men, gathered in Britain, to stake their cross-channel departure on the weather?

Have you ever relied on the weather to cooperate, and then it did ... or ... didn't? What was the outcome of your weather-dependant endeavor?

What happens if something important - like a wedding or an outdoor concert - is dependent on good weather which unexpectedly turns bad? At what point, in the planning process, do we need to have an alternative plan?

Media Stream



General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Omaha Beach - 6 June 1944

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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