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From the U.S. Army Center of Military History, we see a picture of preparation for the cross-Channel attack. "In preparation for the invasion, artillery equipment is loaded aboard LCTS at an English port. Brixham, England. 1 June 1944. Photo by Nehez. SC206438."

Until June of 1944, the war in Europe had only one front - the Eastern Front - which had already caused the deaths of millions of people. The horrific battle of Stalingrad, which remains the deadliest battle in military history, produced massive losses for the Soviet Union.

Another area of fighting - potentially a western front in France - would relieve some of the pressure and would cause Germany's forces to be spread more thinly. It would also keep Joseph Stalin from negotiating a separate peace which, in the minds of Allied leaders, was a worrisome possibility.

At the Casablanca Conference of January 1943 the Brits (who were skeptical of a successful Cross-Channel attack) agreed in principle to a 1944 invasion of the Continent. They had reason to be concerned.

Dunkergue (the photograph depicts British prisoners in 1940) and Dieppe (another bad result in 1942) had already proven in this war how disastrous a failed Cross-Channel attack could be. But Britain had great ports, and its southern shore could provide the springboard for a successfully launched invasion of German-occupied France. It was an event which Hitler expected.

Balancing the prior loss of so many young British men (who had previously died in French trenches during WWI) against the huge risk that an attempted Allied assault on France could fail, Churchill warned that the beaches of France might be "choked with the bodies of the flower of American and British manhood."

But ... what choice did the Allies have? Without an amphibious assault on French beaches, how would the Allies break Hitler's hold over Europe?

Despite the chance of failure, the Allies decided to move forward. They called their developing plan "Operation Overlord."

On the day it launched, even the Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower, was uncertain the invasion would succeed. He penned a note, to be released in the event of failure, stating that all blame was entirely his.

One can see evidence of Ike's concerns in that note. He dated it "July" 5 instead of "June" 5.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-CROSS-CHANNEL-ATTACK-Normandy-Invasion>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-CROSS-CHANNEL-ATTACK-Normandy-Invasion>

## Questions 2 Ponder

### Is There Such a Thing As No Other Choice?

With Hitler occupying France, the Allies believe they have no other choice but to undertake an extremely dangerous invasion beginning with the Normandy coast.

Two deadly events have already resulted from attempted cross-channel invasions. Dunkerque (in 1940) and Dieppe (in 1942) were disasters for many men who died there, in Northern France.

However, if the Allies do not mount an invasion, to tumble Hitler's "Atlantic Wall," the war in Europe will likely drag on. Despite the risks and the dangers, the Allies decide to move forward with an invasion of Normandy.

Did the Allies have a choice to invade, or not invade, Normandy? Explain your answer.

Do you think there is ever such a thing as "no other choice?" Why, or why not?

Have you ever faced a situation where you had "no other choice" but to do something you really didn't want to do? How did it turn out?

## Media Stream



### Joseph Stalin

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Joseph-Stalin->



### Casablanca Conference - Photo

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

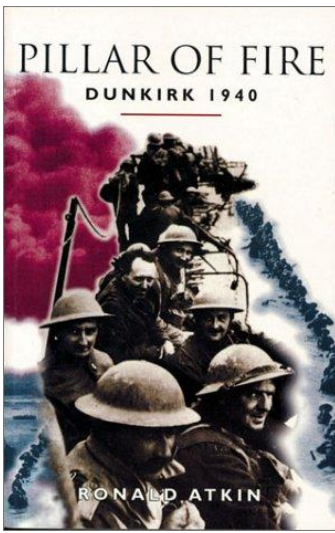
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Casablanca-Conference-Photo>



### Dunkerque - Evacuation

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dunkerque-Evacuation>



### Pillar of Fire: Dunkirk 1940 - by Ronald Adkin

Image online, courtesy [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) website.

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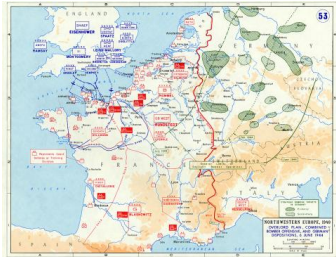


### Dieppe - Avoiding Disaster

Image online, courtesy [iBiblio - The Public's Library and Digital Archive](https://www.ibiblio.org).

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dieppe-Avoiding-Disaster>



### Map - Northwestern Europe, 1940

Image online, courtesy U.S. Military Academy Map Atlases.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Northwestern-Europe-1940>



### Churchill - Photo, 1942

Image online, courtesy Imperial War Museum.

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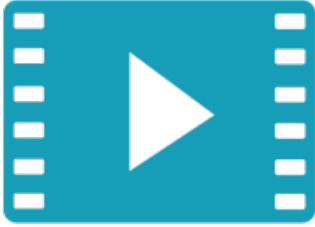


### Preparing for a Cross-Channel Attack

U.S. National Archives; photo by Nehez. SC206438

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### Operation Dynamo - Evacuation at Dunkirk

Historical footage online, online courtesy BBC.

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### D-Day - Germany Prepares to Defend French Occupation

Video clip online, courtesy WW2GermanNewsreels' Channel at YouTube.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/D-Day-Germany-Prepares-to-Defend-French-Occupation>