



0. LET'S GO! - Story Preface

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Allied paratroopers, about ready to leave England, get final instructions before their departure. Image number RG-208-MO-10H, National Archives.

Years before Eisenhower gave the "Let's go" order, Allied commanders had secretly worked to plot every battle-plan detail.

While British and American generals thought through specifics, Air force personnel practiced bombing runs. As Churchill and Roosevelt fretted over the progress of the war, men trained for the invasion in England.

Training for D-Day was sometimes hard to justify when troops were desperately needed elsewhere. How could one afford to pull men from the Mediterranean, for example, to practice for a beach assault in England? Even so, nearly all U.S. troops involved in the Overlord assault were trained for the mission - using live ammo - in Woolacombe, England.

Enemy artillery and land mines along the French coast would be deadly, but Allied planners were sure that "V Bombs" (German pilotless aircraft launched from the Pas-de-Calais area into southern Britain, including London) would not be a factor during the invasion.

Anti-landing obstacles on the beaches, however, were something else. They (plus devices such as the "Belgian Gate") were intended to ensnare assault troops who, like prey in a spider's web, could be pounced on and easily killed.

With their training complete, Allied personnel from all branches of military service (like these paratroopers marching to the airfield on June 5th) awaited orders to ship out of southern England.

Details of where the invasion would actually take place were kept secret until the last possible moment.

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

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LET-S-GO-Normandy-Invasion)

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Questions 2 Ponder

What Meanings Can We Ascribe to the Command "Let's Go?"

When the men in the room were later asked what the General said, as he made clear his decision that June 6th

would be D-Day, few men had the same answer.

Their recollections ranged from: “We will sail tomorrow;” to “OK, boys. We will go;” to “OK, let'er rip;” to “OK, we'll go.”

Whatever his exact words, Eisenhower's order to begin the cross-channel attack on June 6th had a profound impact on millions of people.

Do you think it's important to know General Eisenhower's exact words when he told his commander that the invasion was a “go?” Why, or why not?

Historians have spent a great deal of time trying to determine Eisenhower's specific words. Do you think that is a good or a bad use of time? Explain your answer.

If you had been the one to pick Eisenhower's words, to start the invasion, what would those words have been?

How Do We Keep a Massive Plan Secret?

When the Allies were planning the Normandy invasion, mission commanders had to keep more than a million men from learning the location. At the time, and later, people speculated that the information was the best-kept secret on the planet.

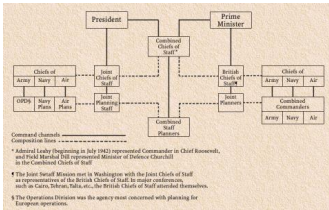
With so many moving parts—such as ships, planes, men—involved in the Normandy Invasion, how would it be possible to keep the exact location of the landings a secret?

Why was it so important that the landing-locations were kept secret?

If the landing-locations had not been kept secret, what impact may that have had on the war itself?

Do you think that keeping the D-Day secret would be possible today? Why, or why not?

Media Stream



D-Day - Command Channel Detail

Image described above, online courtesy HyperWar Foundation and iBiblio - The Public's Library and Digital Archive at University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).

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Allied Commanders - Battle Plans

Image described above, online courtesy HyperWar Foundation and iBiblio - The Public's Library and Digital Archive at University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).

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D-Day - Bombing Run Sorties

Image online, courtesy the [World War II](#) database.

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Training for the Normandy Invasion in England

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Online, courtesy HyperWar Foundation and iBiblio - The Public's Library and Digital Archive at University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).

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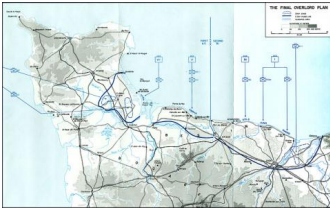


D-Day - Military Training Exercises

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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D-Day - The Final Overlord Plan

Image described above, online courtesy HyperWar Foundation and iBiblio - The Public's Library and Digital Archive at University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).

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Operation Overlord - Training for the Beach Assault

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Online, courtesy HyperWar Foundation and iBiblio - The Public's Library and Digital Archive at University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).

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D-Day Prep - Training Maneuvers with Live Ordnance

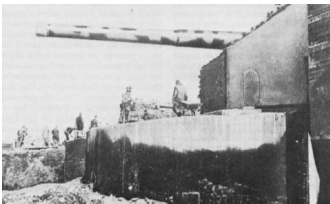
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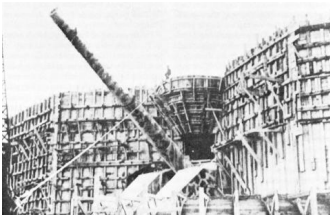
Normandy Invasion - German Artillery

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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Normandy - Enemy Bunkers and Deadly Artillery

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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German Pilotless Aircraft - WWII

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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Normandy Beaches - Anti-Landing Obstacles, 1944

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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D-Day - Belgian Gate, German Defensive Measure

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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Normandy Invasion - Wounded Soldiers on the Battle Field

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Normandy Invasion - Deploying Paratroopers

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Operation Overlord - Ready to Begin The Campaign

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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Normandy Invasion Launch Site - Ready to Ship Out

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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Boading Troop Carriers to Cross the English Channel

Image, described above, online courtesy U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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Invasion Force Enroute to Normandy

Image described above from the United States Army in World War II Series, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Online, courtesy HyperWar Foundation and iBiblio - The Public's Library and Digital Archive at University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).

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Paratroopers Leave England

Image number RG-208-MO-10H; National Archives.

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Normandy Invasion: D-Day

This historical newsreel, now maintained at the U.S. National Archives, depicts actual D-Day battle scenes.

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German Defenses at Normandy

Video clip online, courtesy WW2GermanNewsreels' Channel at YouTube.

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