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As American troops reach the Normandy coast, some of them were attacked, and killed, in their landing craft. The U.S. Army Center for Military History describes this picture: "Members of an American landing party lend helping hands to other members of their organization whose landing craft was sunk by enemy action on the coast of France. These survivors reached Omaha Beach, by using a life raft. Photographer: Weintraub, 6 June 1944. SC190366."

The Allies needed at least an hour of daylight before their first assault troops landed (the link is to an official U.S. record) on the French shore. During that time, bombers would try to make the "going on the ground" a bit easier.

In the meantime, Allied ships (carrying unbelievable amounts of equipment and hundreds of thousands of troops) crossed the choppy English Channel. Ten miles from the beaches of Normandy, landing craft were launched from transport vessels.

As British, Canadian and American forces approached their target beaches, German soldiers (firing from strategic positions on and behind the invasion area) mounted a fearsome defense. Mist and enemy-created smoke obscured first-wave landing-site landmarks.

When transport vessels sank, men overboard were threatened by a rising tide. Medics, performing unbelievable acts of heroism on the beaches, also pulled drowning men to the relative "safety" of dry land.

Forced to cross tidal flats despite full exposure to enemy fire, some of the troops sought shelter under German-placed beach obstacles. Such measures did little good and, in fact, often resulted in still heavier losses.

Notwithstanding significant deaths and injuries on the shore, and attempted German countermeasures, Allied forces pushed ahead to secure their beachhead.

It was a time when men were thrust into situations they could not really comprehend - when some soldiers drowned (or were shot) before they ever reached the Normandy shore. As one D-Day fighter, an American named Albert Nervo, told a reporter for the *Akron Beacon Journal* in 1965:

Your mind blanks out in times like that. Your brain can't register what your eyes are trying to tell you.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DEATH-ON-THE-SHORE-Normandy-Invasion>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DEATH-ON-THE-SHORE-Normandy-Invasion>

Questions 2 Ponder

How Do We Manage When Our Minds Blank-Out?

In times of extreme hardship, when our minds seem to blank-out, our brains “can’t register what your eyes are trying to tell you.”

This statement was the way a D-Day American soldier described the Normandy landings twenty-one years after they occurred.

It was a time when people were thrust into situations they could not really comprehend - when some soldiers drowned (or were shot) before they ever reached the Normandy shore.

Have you ever experienced a situation where your mind went blank and your brain seemed not to comprehend what your eyes were telling you? Explain your answer.

If you have never had such an experience, can you imagine a scenario where such a thing could happen? Would the event have to threaten your life, to produce such mind-blanking reactions, or are there other situations which could equally cause such an impact?

Media Stream



D-Day - Americans Land on Normandy's Coast

U.S. National Archives

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/D-Day-Americans-Land-on-Normandy-s-Coast0>

Equipment For the Normandy Invasion

From the "American Forces in Action Series," *OMAHA Beachhead (6 June--13 June 1944)* was compiled by the Historical Division of the War Department.



Of this series, General George C. Marshall (then Chief of Staff) said:

AMERICAN FORCES IN ACTION is a series prepared by the War Department especially for the information of wounded men. It will show these soldiers, who have served their country so well, the part they and their comrades played in achievement which do honor to the record of the United States Army.

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Landing Craft Launched Miles Off-Shore

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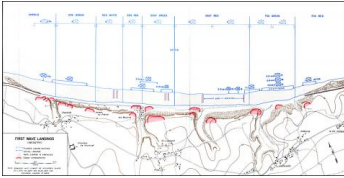
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First Wave Landings

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Heroic Rescues at the Normandy Beaches

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Sheltered Behind Beach Obstacles

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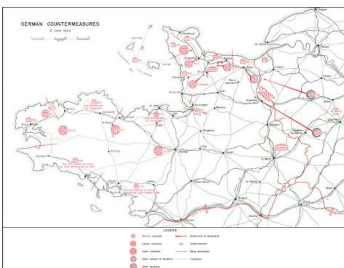
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Evacuating Wounded Soldiers

Image, described above, online courtesy U.S. Army Center of Military History's *The Normandy Invasion: The Story in Pictures*.

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German Countermeasures - Map

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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Allied Forces - Securing and Supplying the Beachhead

Image SC190631, described above, online courtesy U.S. Army Center of Military History's *The Normandy Invasion: The Story in Pictures*.

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