

D-Day

D-Day Facts

- 6th June 1944 was D-Day.
- Allied¹ forces landed in Normandy (France).
- It began the liberation of Western Europe from the German occupation².
- Over 150 000 soldiers landed on the beaches of Northern France.



Why Did It Take Place?

Germany had invaded France and most of Europe. Hitler was trying to take over Britain from France. However, Britain and the United States had managed to slow down the advancing³ German forces. They were now able to strike back.

The Allies gathered troops and equipment in Britain in preparation for the landings. They also increased the number of air strikes and bombings in German territory. Just before the invasion, over 1000 bombs a day were hitting German targets. They bombed railways, bridges, airfields, and other important places to slow down and delay the German army in its advance.

Did You Know?

- The D-Day landings were planned for a clear, moonlit night.
- The landings needed a high tide to be successful.
- The plans were called Operation Overlord.

What Were the Plans?

The Germans knew that troops were gathering in the South of England. They could tell preparations were in place, but they didn't know when or where the attacks would happen. They thought the invasion would be at Calais (a much shorter sea crossing), so enemy troops were sent there.

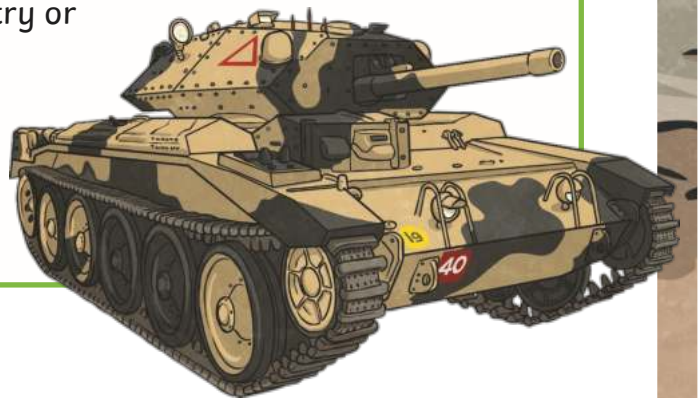


The Attack

<p>The first part of the attack began with paratroopers.</p>	<p>These were the men who jumped out of planes using parachutes. They jumped at night in the pitch dark and landed behind enemy lines. Their job was to destroy important targets and capture bridges so that the main invasion force could land on the beaches. Thousands of dummies were dropped to make the enemy think that many more men were parachuting down.</p>
<p>The next stage of the battle involved thousands of planes.</p>	<p>They dropped bombs on German defences.</p>
<p>Shortly after that, warships began to bomb the beaches from the water.</p>	
<p>While the bombing was going on, members of the French Resistance spoiled the German communications by cutting telephone lines and destroying railways.</p>	
<p>Finally, the main invasion force of over 6000 ships carrying troops, weapons, tanks, and equipment approached the beaches of Normandy.</p>	

Glossary

1. Most troops came from Britain, USA, Canada or France. However, they were also supported by troops from Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Poland.
2. The invasion and control of a country or area by enemy forces.
3. To move or bring forward: The general advanced his troops to the new position.



Questions

1. What was the date of D-Day?

2. Which countries made up the Allied forces?

3. How many soldiers landed on the beaches of France?

4. Why were railways, bridges and roads bombed?

5. Why did the Germans think the attack would be at Calais?

6. What was the French Resistance doing whilst the bombing was going on?

7. Why do you think the attack was planned for a moonlit night?

8. Why do you think the attack was planned for a high tide?

9. How does the glossary help you to understand the text?

10. If you had to make up a name for the attack, what name would you give it and why?

