



D-DAY REMEMBERED

75 Years Later

Presented by Russ Gifford

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- 1. Why do we remember D-Day each year?**
- 2. If Overlord had not been successful, what happens?**
- 3. If this battle was so important, how did Eisenhower get chosen to run it? Did that have a significance in the outcome of the battle?**

BEFORE OVERLORD

- As early as 1942, the US was committed to landing troops on the European Continent to bring the war to Germany.
- Stalin demanded it.
- Churchill opposed it.
- We had a lot to learn.



The Dieppe 'raid' (Operation Jubilee – August 1942)
Of 6,500 men involved, (6,000 were Canadians)
almost 60% were killed, wounded, or Captured.

BEFORE OVERLORD

- A more realistic goal was put forward by Churchill, and in November of 1942, Americans got their first experience at a sea invasion.

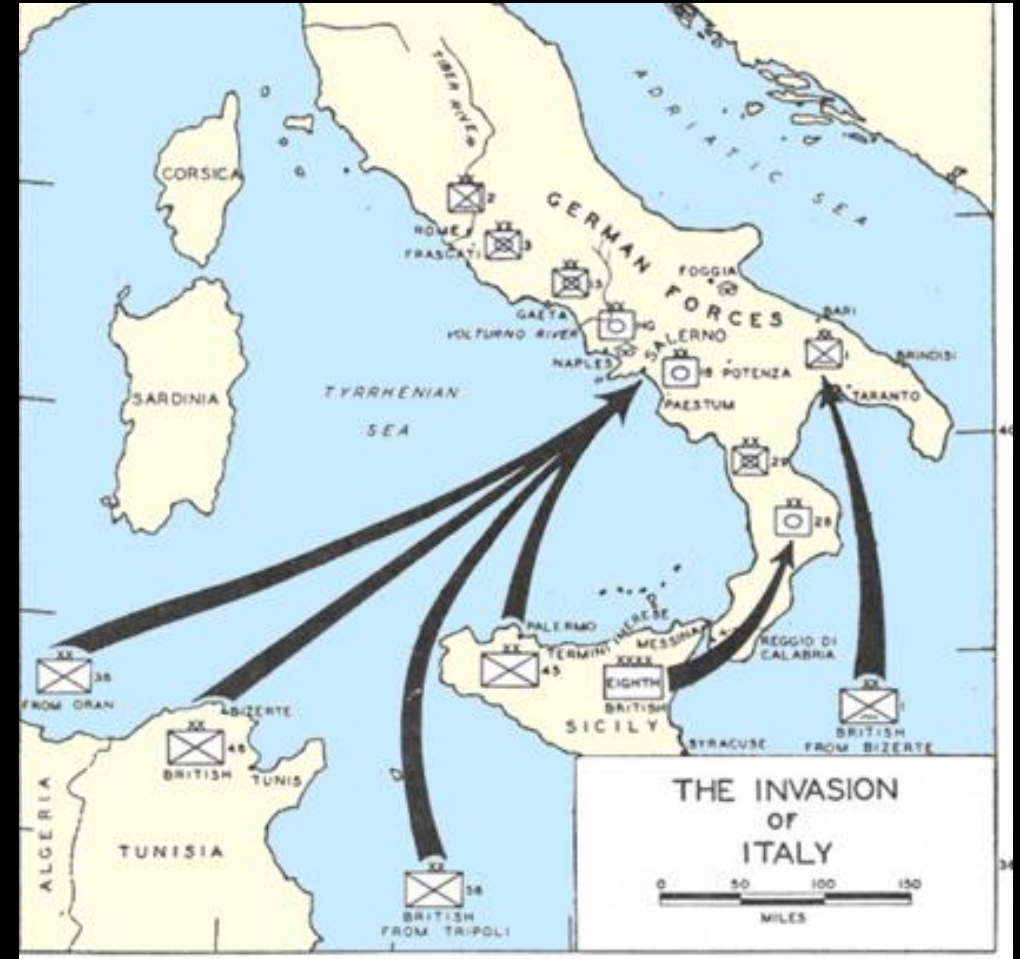


Facing French Vichy forces, not crack German troops, the Allies lost 480 killed and 720 wounded.

- We had a lot to learn.

BEFORE OVERLORD

- By May 1943, Afrika was decided - but Churchill continued to push for a strike at the 'soft underbelly' rather than France.
- Invasions at Sicily and Italy followed.
- We had a lot to learn.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO WIN?

- From the end of the Battle of Britain, the Allies would attempt to bomb Germany into submission.

While the Air War against Germany was successful, it would not knock Germany out of the war.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO WIN?

It had, however, cost 158,000 British, Canadian, and American aviators their lives.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO WIN?

Many thousands of American B-17 crews passed through Sioux City at the Army Air Base.



Jim Henry, Navigator



Bombers at Sioux City Air Base (Sioux City Public Museum)

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO WIN?

It was here they learned their job on these 'flying fortresses.'

And the air superiority that the Allies had earned was all important.



Jim Henry, Navigator

OVERLORD

By 1943, the decision was inevitable.

Despite Churchill's misgivings, an invasion of Europe was the only way to meet the goals of Unconditional Surrender by the Axis powers.



FDR, Churchill at Casablanca Conference, 1943



OVERLORD

“We’ve got to got to Europe, and fight.”

Dwight Eisenhower, in a note to himself from an earlier point in the war.

OVERLORD

The selection of Eisenhower to lead the operation was a surprise.

Churchill expected, and demanded Gen. George Marshall.

FDR said no. Marshall was his top military advisor, and he could not spare him.



Gen. George Marshall

OVERLORD

Marshall then pushed Eisenhower to the head of the list, jumping him over others in the ridged military chain of command.



Gen. Dwight Eisenhower

OVERLORD

It ruffled feathers. Marshall didn't care – it was the right choice.

In January, 1944, Ike flew to London to receive his orders: *“You will enter the continent of Europe, and undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces.”*



Gen. Dwight Eisenhower

OVERLORD

Ike was a new kind of General – one that had never led an army on the battlefield.

But he had led the Afrika, Sicily, and Italian invasions.

And he had learned a lot.

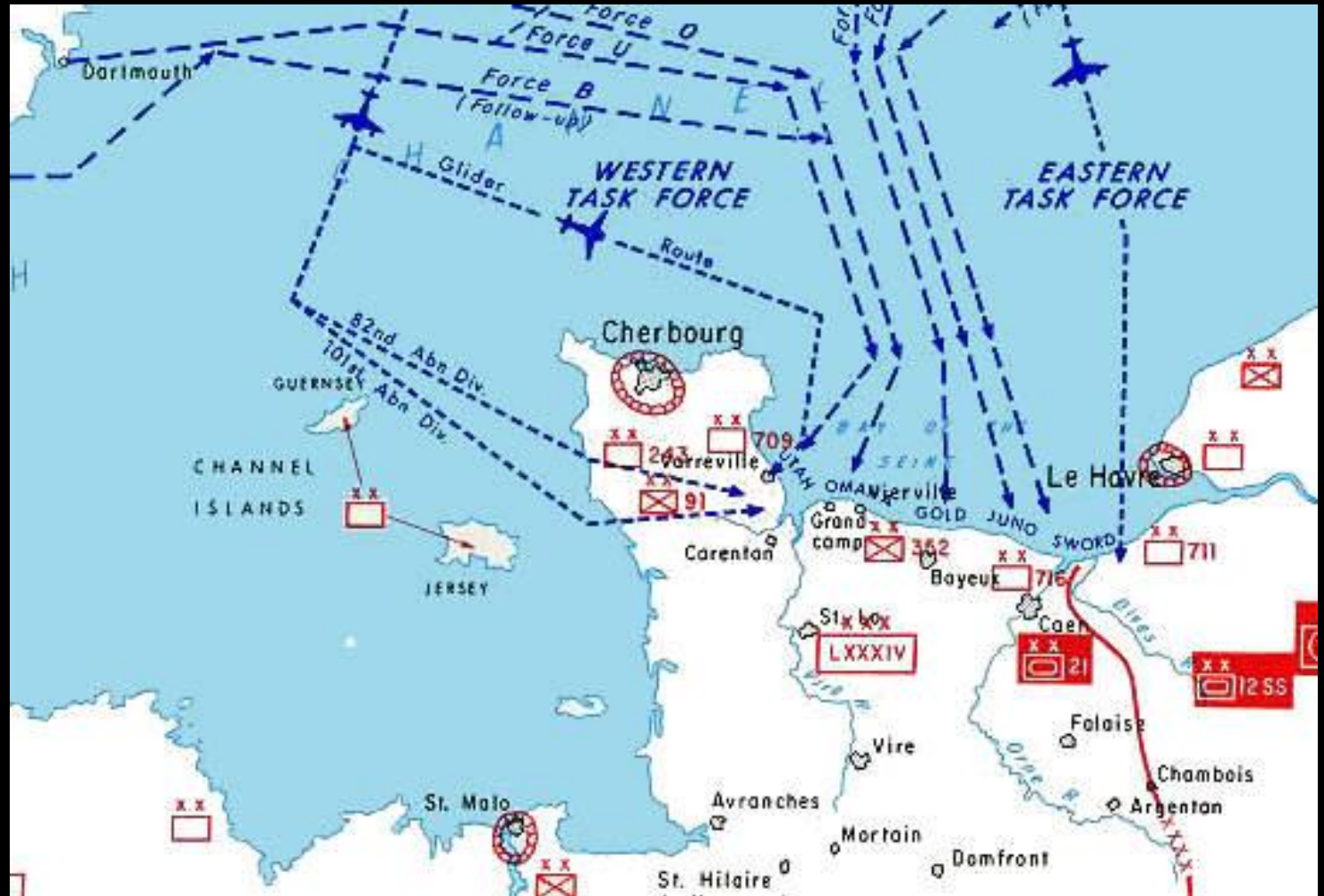


ALL IN – AND THE FIRST OUT

The plan required coordination on a scale unimagined before WWII:

176,000 men would be in the air and on the water hours before.

Everything had to work together.



D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

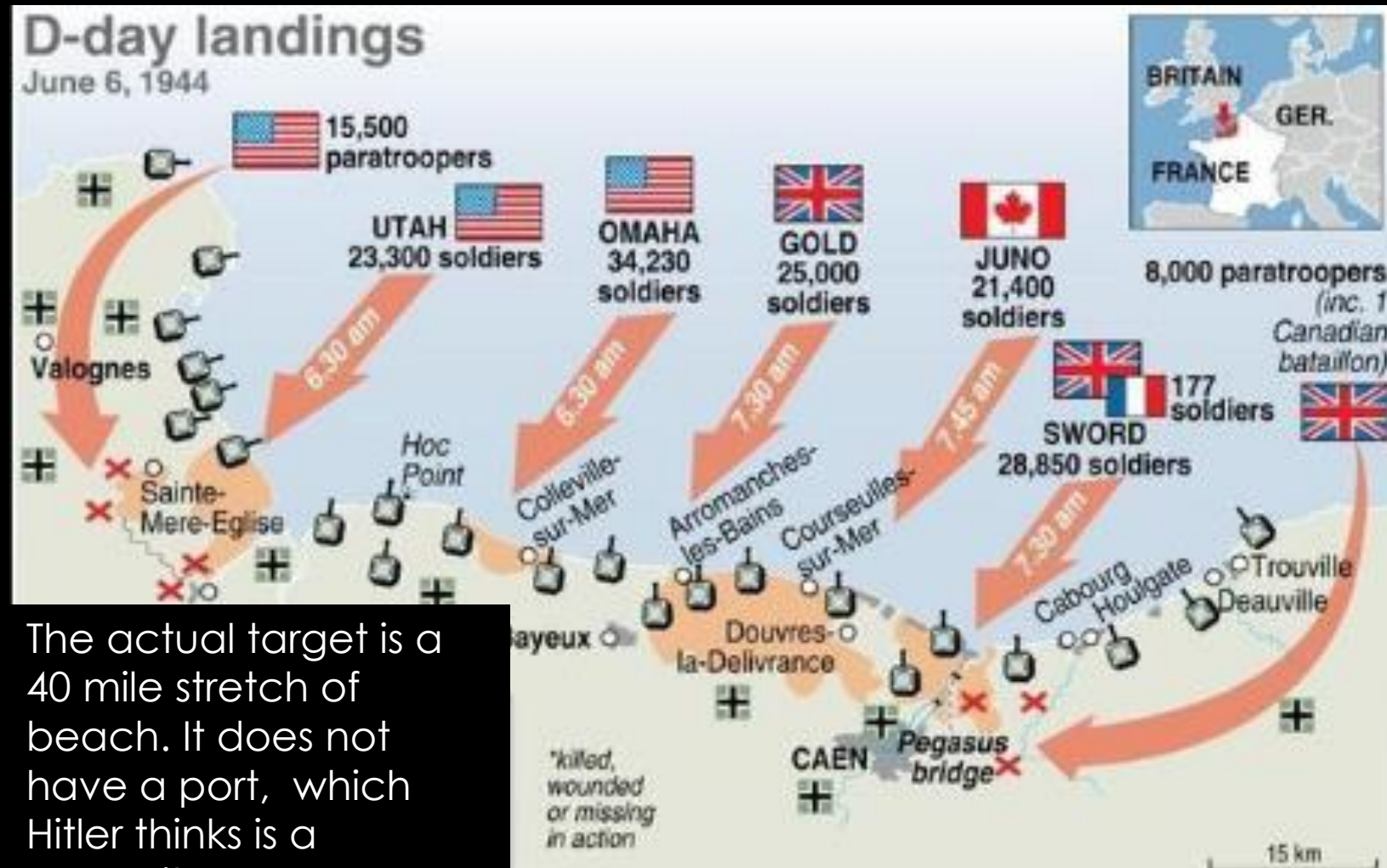
All of southern England is an army camp, with 2.8 million soldiers, crowded with all the supplies and materials that an invading army would require. How long could it wait?

“This mighty host... was as tense as a great human spring, coiled, waiting....” -- Gen. Eisenhower



THE TARGET

- The major Allied advantage is the Germans have to defend all of Europe.

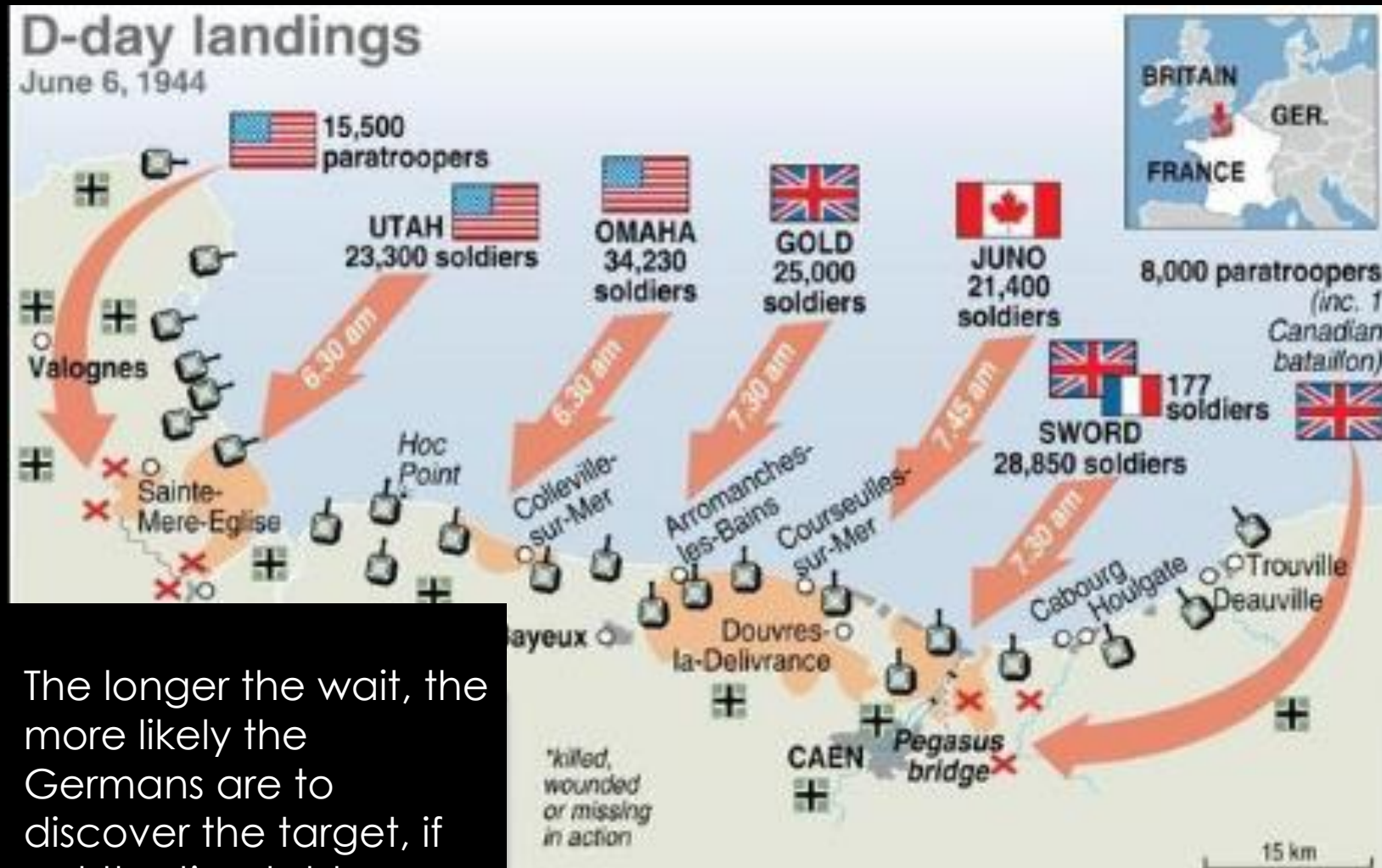


The actual target is a 40 mile stretch of beach. It does not have a port, which Hitler thinks is a necessity.

THE TARGET

But realize – The Allies are attempting to do what has never been done in modern times:

Crossing the English Channel against opposition.



The longer the wait, the more likely the Germans are to discover the target, if not the timetable.

D-DAY -1, 1944

Ike had traveled to the staging area to talk to the paratroopers that will be the first on the ground.



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

I have full courage in your devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

---Eisenhower

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944 ! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned ! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory !

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory !

Good Luck ! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.



Dwight D. Eisenhower

OVERLORD

***3 Divisions of
paratroopers
will drop
behind the
beaches
shortly after
midnight.***



OVERLORD

Their goal – prevent, or at least delay, German reinforcements from reaching the beaches.



LOCAL VOICES

“You keep hearing them say it was a such a nice, moonlit clear night, but it was anything but. It was darker than pitch.”
– 2nd Lt. Jack Prince

On June 5, 1944 Prince, 1938 graduate of Storm Lake, Iowa, flew 21 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division to a drop zone near Ste-Mere Eglise, France.

D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

That, and the weather, didn't make the choices any easier.

Now delayed a day by weather, in the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, Dwight Eisenhower makes a crucial decision to go forward with the attack on Normandy.

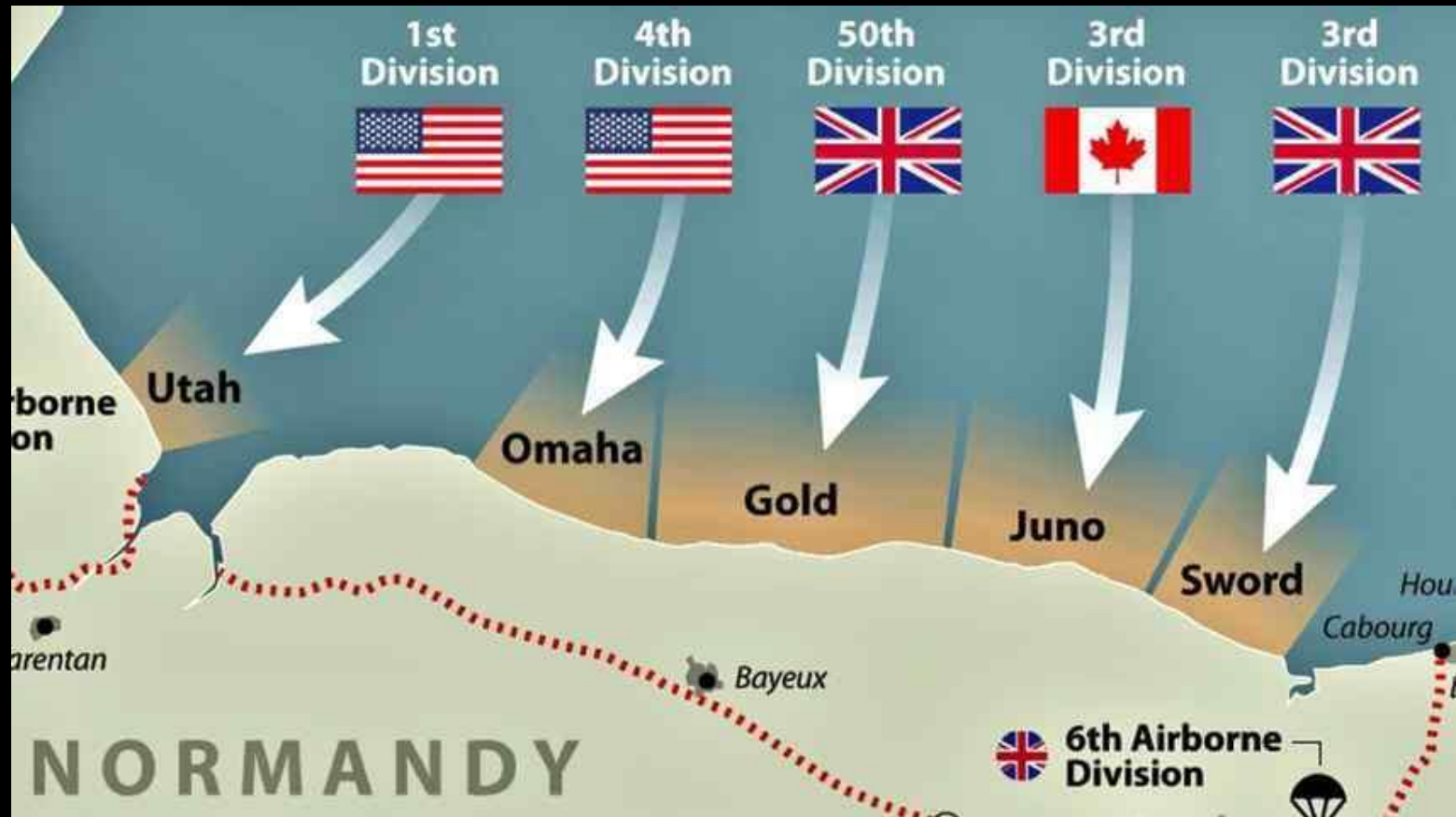


D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

Ships had steamed into the channel in the heavy weather. They now get the go ahead signal to head for France.

These 4600 ships will deliver 170,000 men to the beaches by H-Hour

0630 – moments after sunrise.



AIRCRAFT

0600

Thousands of planes are to strike the beaches and their gun emplacements – again, timed to hit only 30 minutes before sunrise reveals the invasion to the enemy!



LOCAL VOICES

“We knew it was big. I could see the ships and the pursuit planes below.”

– Victor Scholten, Sheldon High School grad, from Primghar, Iowa, remembering his 7 hour bombing run from June 6, 1944.

WARSHIPS

Starting at 0530, the 600 warships with their 10, 12 and 16 inch guns are to open fire on the same targets.

It will last to 0625.





THE PLAN

***“Plans are everything before battle.
They are useless once it has begun.”***

---Eisenhower

C-47 GLIDERS ON THE GROUND

- The gliders took terrible losses. Some groups as high as 60%.
- But overall, they fared better than expected.
- And Iowa boys were there – J. Younker, radio operator, jeep driver, was one of these.





**Despite
incredible
losses –
almost all
their goals
were met.**

**And enemy
phone and
telegraph
were
completely
disrupted.**



JUNE 6, 1944

LOCAL VOICES

“It was like being in the ocean in a damned dishpan.”

– D.H. Moseman, 1939 Allen, Nebraska grad, who would be driving a bulldozer to punch a hole in the seawall.





LOCAL VOICES

“I said a prayer.”

– **George Mills, PFC, U.S. Army, from Boyden, Iowa, landing at 0900 on Omaha.**

D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

While everyone faces a fight, most are better than the situation at Omaha Beach.

The cloud cover had prevented an effective airstrike – and the enemy guns force the landing craft to discharge men too far from the beach.





LOCAL VOICES

“Things are happening so fast, you’re just concentrating on staying alive.”

– Frank Raymond, on what was going through his mind when the landing craft gate opened at Omaha Beach. Raymond, with the 5th Rangers, was from Little Sioux, Iowa.





LOCAL VOICES

“I can still see all the boys on the beach. I still see a boy getting plasma. They said, ‘Don’t stop.’”

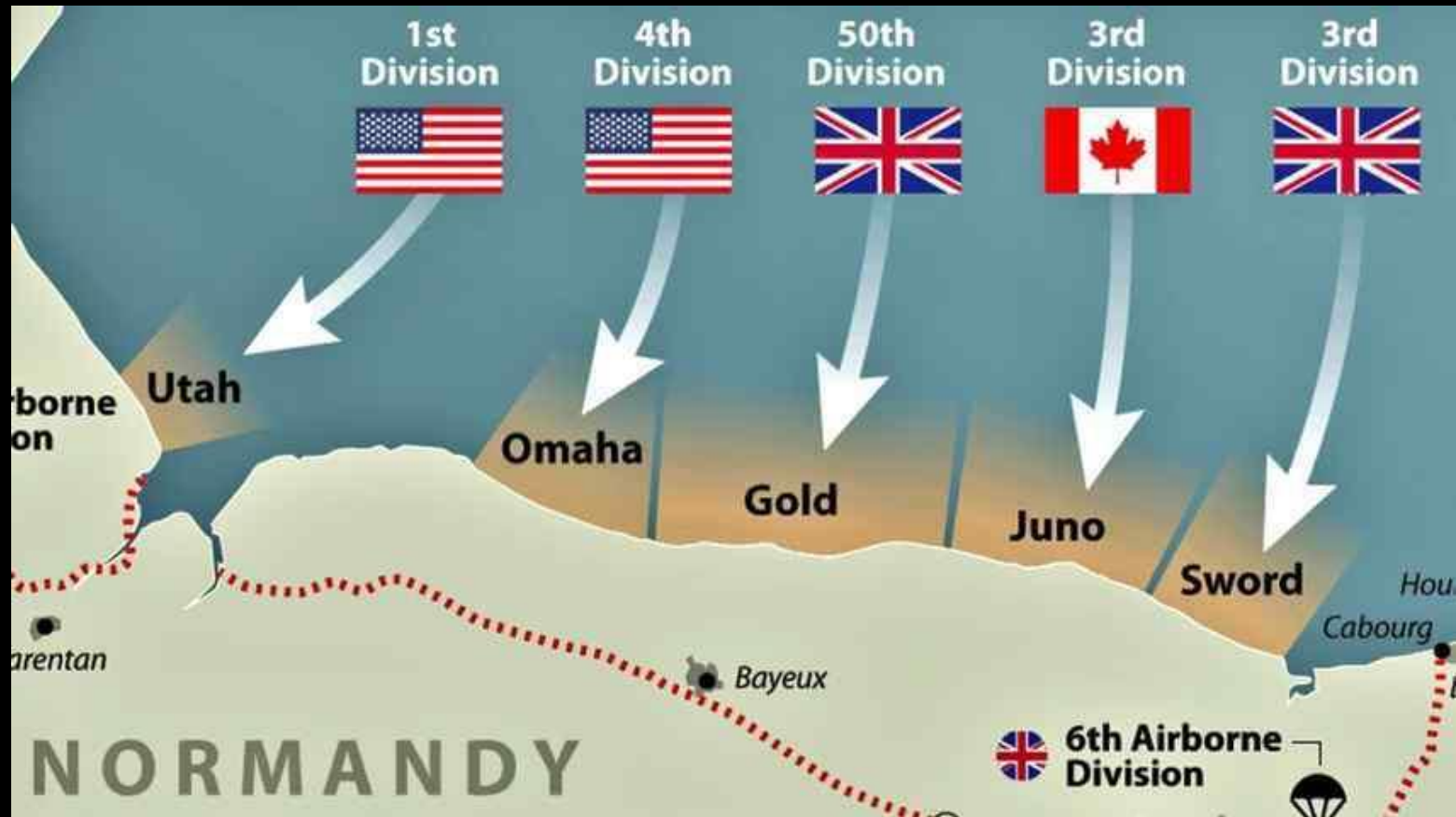
– George Mills, from Boyden, Iowa.



D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

Heavy packs will cause deaths when the landing boats unload too far from the beaches –

but not as many as the unimpeded cross fire from the Germans who still held Omaha beach.









LOCAL VOICES

“When the front gate of my landing craft opened, my life changed, and has not been the same since.”

– Harland D. Van Valkenburg, from Sioux City, Iowa, who landed at Omaha.

D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

Utah had met little resistance – and it quickly folded in 3 hours.

The British and Canadian beaches, things went better than expected – though they did not take Caen.





WHY OMAHA BEACH?

Heavy cloud cover had caused the air bombardment to miss.

The shelling from the warships was inaccurate.

Landing craft failed to get close.

And all but 2 of the 97 support tanks sank.

D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

Gen. Omar Bradley considered withdrawing the troops – but that would leave the success at the other beaches vulnerable.

He grimly held on – and so did the troops.



D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

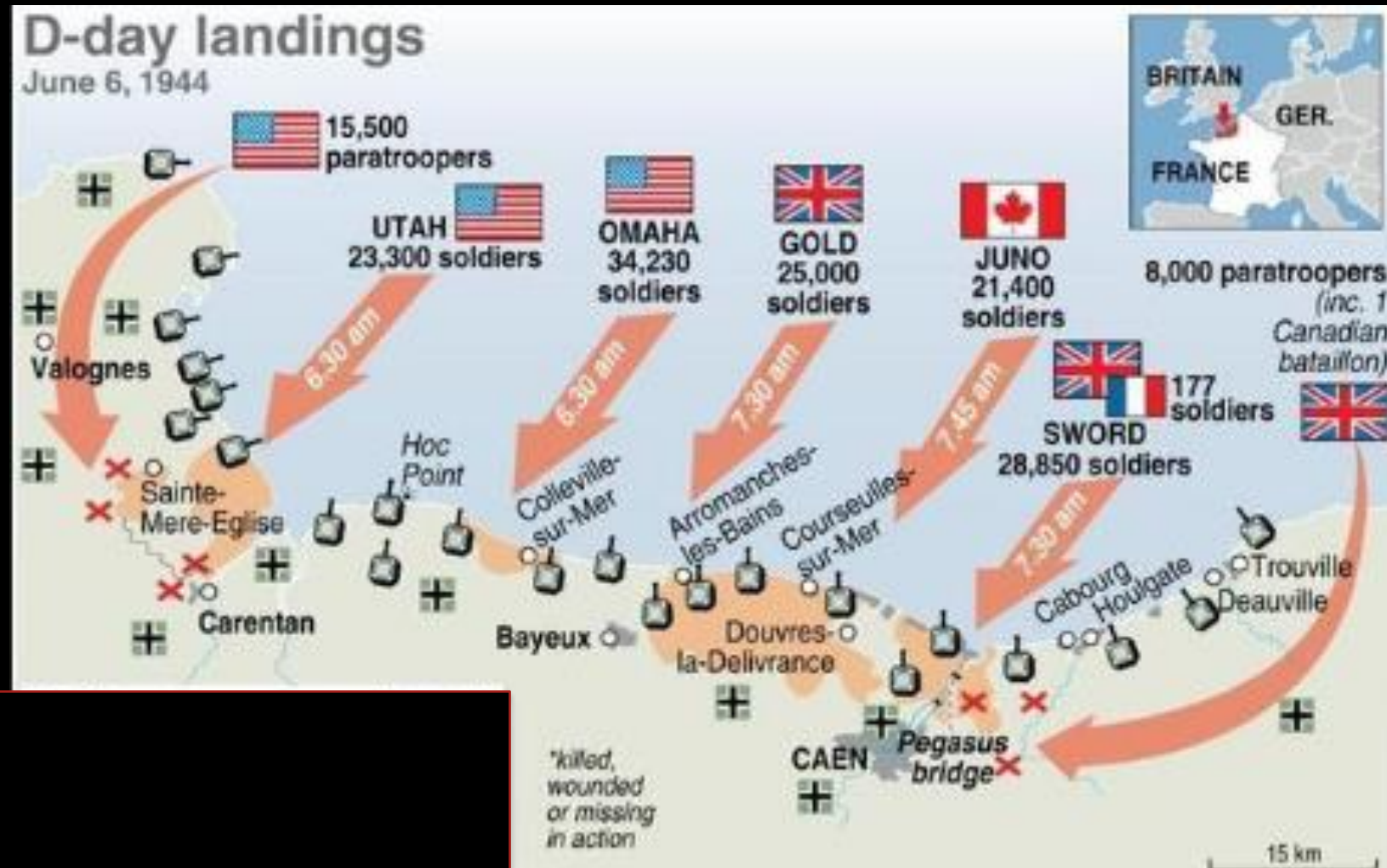
“If we are going to die here, we might as well die fighting.”

It was bluster, but it was the only choice. Individuals acts of heroism rose to the occasion, and leaders began to improvise.



D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944

Yet even on Omaha, with the gridlock of later arrivals backed up, and delayed exit from the beach, by day's end at Omaha, nearly 34,000 soldiers have a foothold on French soil.



D-DAY IN NUMBERS

11,590 AIRCRAFT

127

AIRCRAFT LOST

14,674

SORTIES (FLIGHT MISSIONS)

6,039

SEA VESSELS

4,413

ALLIED DEATHS

2,499

AMERICANS



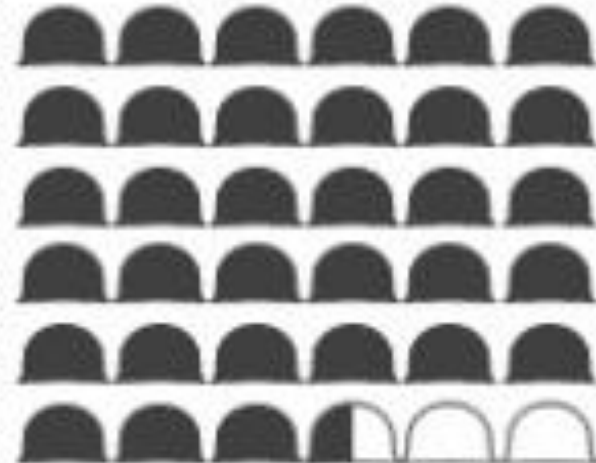
1,914

OTHER ALLIES



156,000

TROOPS DEPLOYED



10,250 CASUALTIES

6,603 U.S.

2,700 UK

946 CANADA

4,000-9,000
GERMAN DEATHS



D-DAY -1, 1944

By the way – this guy?

He is Fred Lindsey, 22, from
Sioux City, Iowa. He will
clear mines from Utah
beach.



ALLIES OPEN INVASION! TROOPS LAND IN FRANCE

EXTRA

British, U.S., Canadian Forces Swarm Ashore from Mighty Armada



DRIFT PIGEON AT ALLIED HQY TROP GLEAMING

PIRE APPEARS U.S. P. WINNER

Landings and Morale Early Via Reconnaissance, Van Eaton and Carlson Appoint Winners

Roosevelt Hails Captures of Route but Sees Costly and Great Battles Ahead

BLUE GRANTS ARE VICTORY



ON THE HOME FRONT

ON THE HOME FRONT



DO YOU HAVE STORY TO SHARE?

CBS Radio broke in with reports that GERMAN radio is claiming the invasion has started –

Considering this:

Rommel is at home, and aids will not risk waking Hitler

Within a few hours, Eisenhower goes on the radio to say the attack is underway. [Link](#)





With the success of Normandy, a clock is ticking on the end of the war.

DOES D-DAY CHANGE THE WAR?

As the Allies break out from Normandy, their advancing armies will discover the Nazi death camps.

If D-Day had failed, and the war continued longer, how many more deaths in the gas chambers, and the concentration camps?



DOES D-DAY CHANGE THE WAR?

D-Day's success has a major impact – it is 'the beginning of the end.'

But had Normandy failed, the Americans would not have quit.

FDR and Churchill were committed to try again, and they would have.

But a failure at D-Day would mean the war would have lasted at least 1 to 2 more years.

WHY DO WE REMEMBER D-DAY?

We remember, because they attempted, and succeeded, at something that had never been achieved.

Crossing the English Channel against opposition.



WHY DO WE REMEMBER D-DAY?

**We remember,
because the
scale of the effort
is almost
unfathomable.**



WHY DO WE REMEMBER D-DAY?

We remember,
because the
sacrifice is
unfathomable –
and forever.



WHY DO WE REMEMBER D-DAY?

“You see your buddies dying left and right.... You look back and see your buddies floating in the water and the water’s all turning red. I was lucky.”

“You’ll never forget that.”

– Frank Raymond, from Little Sioux, Iowa, landed at Omaha.

WHY DO WE REMEMBER D-DAY?

“Every day, I try to think about all the things that I have been blessed with, especially my home, my family.”

“I owe my fellow comrades who paid the ultimate sacrifice my very best effort each day ...”

– – Harland D. Van Valkenburg, from Sioux City, Iowa

WHY DO WE REMEMBER D-DAY?

And of course, the real reason we have a program like this about D-Day, is because at 75, it has slipped from 'memory' to 'history.' And if we don't teach it, they will only know the name, and nothing more.

CREATED BY RUSSELL GIFFORD



*Lifelong Learning Instructor,
Western Iowa Tech Community College,
Sioux City, Iowa 2004 – Present*

Siouxland: Ground Zero in the Great Depression

**IOWA AND THE
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**
Keeping the Home Fires Burning:
The Impact of the Civil War in Iowa

Presented by Russ Gifford
Thursday, April 29; 7 p.m.
Cargill Auditorium No charge



BOOMER CLASSICS: Words that Changed the World

Third Week:
Monday,
10/22 6:30 PM

Revisit the landmark literature and a handful of pivotal
writers that influenced the 1960's. Are they still relevant?
Join us as we search for clues of their continued value 50
years on.

J.R.R.
TOLKIEN

As always, these seminars feature video and audio clips,
with the sights and sounds of the 1960's.

by Russ Gifford
ber 29; 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The Institute for
Lifelong Learning
presents
"KHRUSHCHEV
IN IOWA"

BY THE INSTIT



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