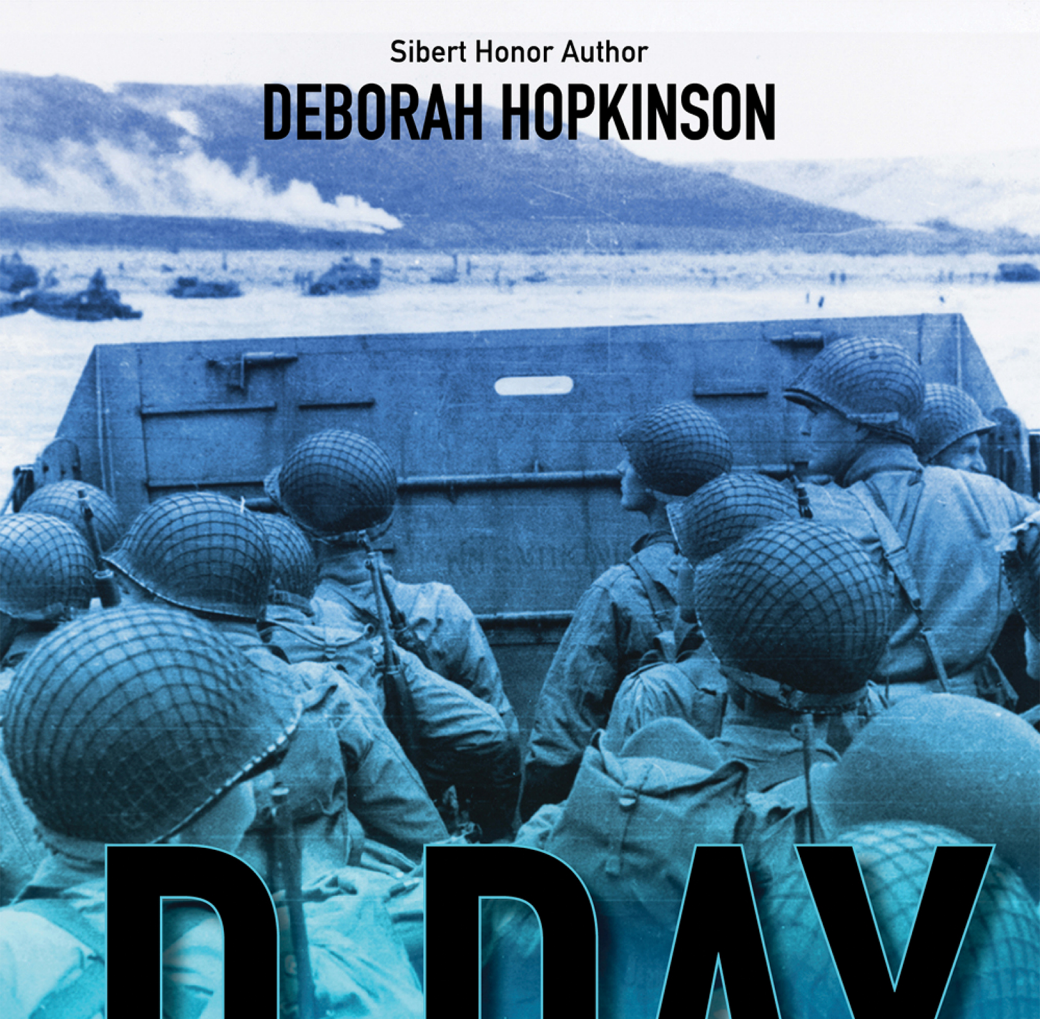


Sibert Honor Author

DEBORAH HOPKINSON



D-DAY

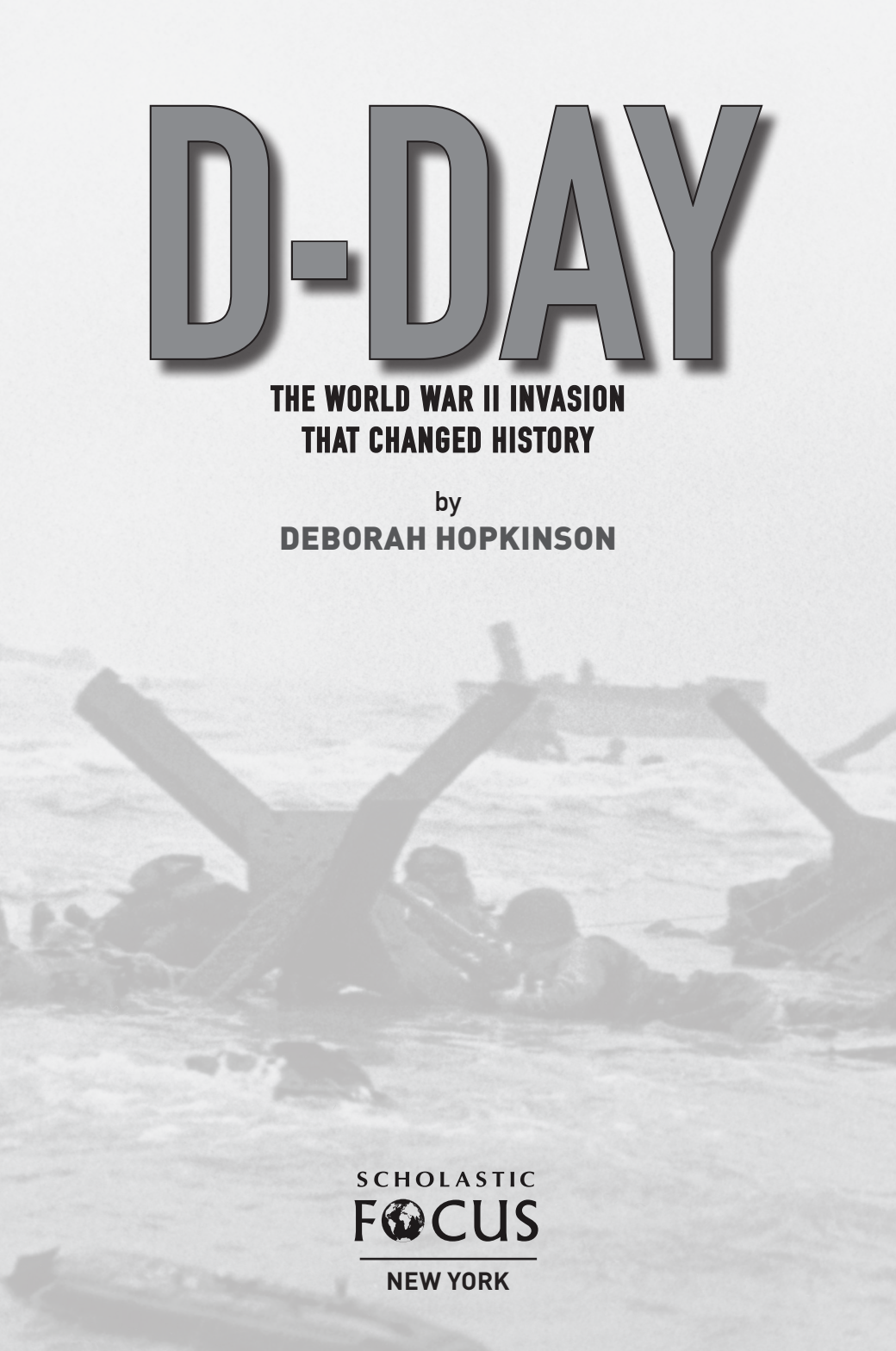
**THE WORLD WAR II INVASION
THAT CHANGED HISTORY**



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by
DEBORAH HOPKINSON



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German-occupied Europe, known as D-Day, was the largest military endeavor in
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chokehold grip on the European continent, which the Allies called "Fortress Europe."

Behind enemy lines, Nazi Germany was engaged in the mass extermination of the
Jewish people and the oppression of civilians across Europe. The goal of D-Day was
no less than the total defeat of Hitler's regime—and the defense of free democracies
everywhere. Knowing they had to breach the coast, the United States, Great Britain,
and Canada planned the impossible. D-Day was an invasion not for conquest, but for
liberation. The vast operation would take years to plan and required complete secrecy
in order to maintain the advantage of surprise. Once deployed, Operation Overlord
involved soldiers, sailors, paratroopers, and specialists, and a heart-breaking number
of casualties on both sides. The major players of D-Day, President Franklin D.

Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and
countless others, have gone down in history. Acclaimed author Deborah Hopkinson
details not just their accomplishments, but the courageous contributions of
commanders, service members, African-Americans, women, journalists, and others to
this critical battle. Her incredible research and masterful weaving of official
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CHAPTER 1



OPERATION OVERLORD

What had to happen for thousands of young paratroopers like David Kenyon Webster to jump out of an airplane, and for tens of thousands more to cross the English Channel to struggle ashore on the beaches of Normandy? Where does the story of D-Day begin?

We could begin on September 3, 1939, when Great Britain and France declared war on Hitler's Nazi Germany after it invaded Poland. We might trace D-Day's roots to May 1940, when British forces were overpowered and retreated to Dunkirk, France. There, to prevent certain defeat, troops were evacuated by naval ships and a flotilla of civilian boats of all sizes. Britain had wanted to return to France ever since.

Or we might begin with the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i on December 7, 1941. The next day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the declaration of war against Japan; the United States declared war on Germany and Italy on December 11, which widened the global conflict and gave Great Britain, at last, a powerful ally in the fight against Hitler. By the time the United States entered the war, Hitler had Europe in his grip: The German Army had invaded



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing the Declaration of War against Japan, December 8, 1941.

France, the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark, the Soviet Union, and Greece, among others.

Then again, we might start on August 19, 1942, when 6,000 British and Canadian forces launched a raid on the French port of Dieppe. Its failure made it clear the invasion of France couldn't happen right away. Britain alone simply didn't have the needed capacity. The invasion would have to wait until "the German Army had been worn down by the Russians, the Luftwaffe [German Air Force] bled white by Allied air power, the U-boats thwarted, and American war production

expanded.” In other words, Germany needed to be weakened before there was any hope of winning.

We could begin telling the story of the complex history of planning for the invasion of France at any of these points in time. Instead, though, we will begin on a day largely forgotten in D-Day history, a rather ordinary day: March 12, 1943. That’s when a forty-nine-year-old British officer named Frederick E. Morgan stepped into an elevator on his way to a meeting at New Scotland Yard in London.

“Just as the lift was taking off, in jumped Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten [a top British military official] himself, fresh from discussion with the British Chiefs of Staff, who proceeded to congratulate me vociferously in spite of the presence of a full load of passengers of all ranks,” Morgan recalled.

Morgan had absolutely no idea what Mountbatten was talking about. He found out a few minutes later when General Hastings Lionel Ismay, Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s chief of staff, handed him a mountain of paper. The stack contained all the previous plans for an assault on Hitler’s “Fortress Europe.”

The continent was protected by a system of coastal defenses known as the Atlantic Wall. Stretching from Scandinavia to Spain, it included troops, manned gun placements, beach obstacles, and mines—all designed to thwart invading forces.

Now the time had come to make the attempt. An assault across the English Channel had been high on the agenda at the recent January 1943 Casablanca Conference. At this Allied

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leaders' summit, Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed the Allies were ready to launch an invasion of France in 1944.

Of course, there was no firm plan in place for any of this. In fact, Morgan was being “invited” to come up with one. The target date was May 1, 1944—less than a year away. It didn't give much time. As for when he should have his plan ready, Morgan was told, “‘No hurry, old boy, tomorrow will do.’”

General Ismay added one final comment on Morgan's task: “‘Well, there it is; it won't work, but you must bloody well make it.’”

Along with his new assignment, Morgan was given a title: Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (Designate), a mouthful soon shortened to COSSAC. (In January 1944, COSSAC offices became SHAEF, Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force.)

Morgan was headquartered at Norfolk House, 31 St. James's Square in London. At first the planning team was just Morgan and a couple of aides. He commandeered an unoccupied space and moved in. “The equipment consisted of a couple of desks and chairs we found in the room, and we were lucky enough also to find a few sheets of paper and a pencil that someone had dropped on the floor.”

And with that, Frederick Morgan set out to plan the largest military endeavor in history.

From the start, Morgan and the team he eventually assembled faced enormous challenges. The schedule was brutally

demanding: The plan needed to be reviewed by the British Chiefs of Staff in July 1943, just a few months away.

As for who would lead it: Well, no Supreme Commander for the Allied Expeditionary Force had yet been named. In the meantime, Morgan, who had no decision-making power or ability to lobby higher-ups for additional resources, would just have to do the best he could within the parameters he was given.

At least the endeavor, formerly known as Roundup, had been given a new code name, chosen from a list of possibilities by Prime Minister Winston Churchill himself.

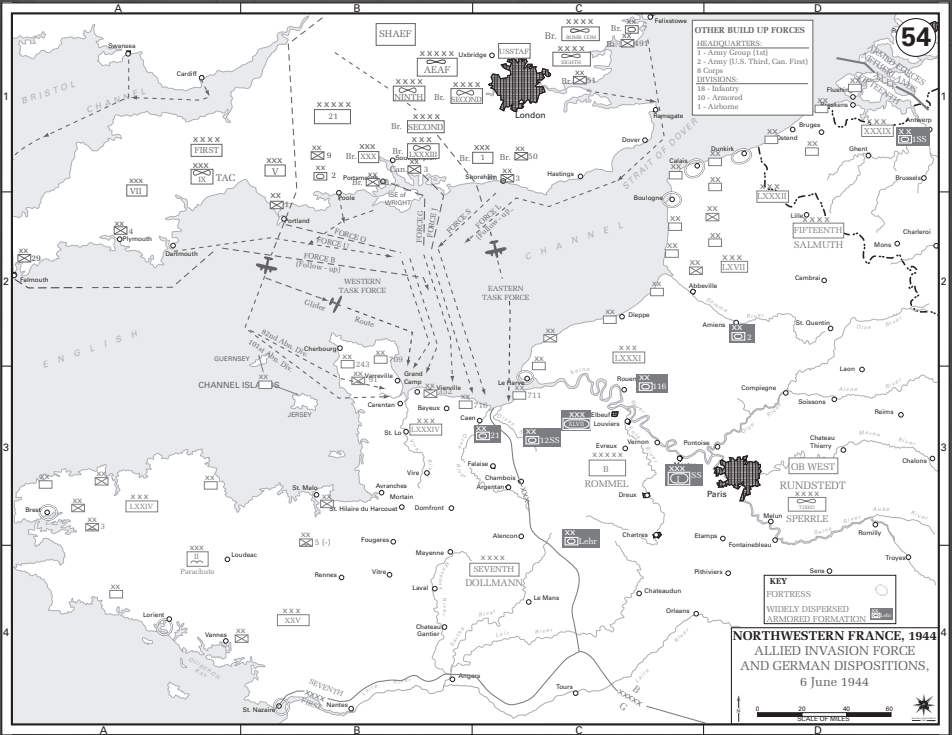
It was called Operation Overlord.



Lt. General Frederick E. Morgan,
Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander.

READER'S INVASION BRIEFING

World War II and the Context for Operation Overlord



A WWII map of the English Channel and northwestern France.

WORLD WAR II, sometimes called the Second World War (1939–1945), was the largest conflict in the history of the world. It pitted the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan against the Allies, which included Great Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union, among others.

Between forty and fifty million people died, including millions of innocent civilians. Many historians believe that the war had its roots in the First World War, which ended in 1918. The peace negotiations following that conflict, especially the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, placed blame and harsh financial burdens on Germany. Adolf Hitler, who opposed the treaty and the postwar government of Germany, rose to power during this time, buoyed by resentment about World War I and a growing German nationalist movement. Under his leadership, the Nazi Party gained control; in 1933, he became chancellor of Germany and before long had assumed the powers of a dictator.

World War II began in 1939, when Germany invaded Poland on September 1. Following this, on September 3, Great Britain and France, both allies of Poland, declared war on Germany. Germany extended her power, invading Norway and Denmark in April 1940. In May, Hitler targeted France, as well as the “low countries” in the coastal region of northwest Europe, invading Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg in May.

Hitler’s extreme racist and anti-Semitic beliefs led to a horrific plan, called “the Final Solution,” to annihilate all Jewish people. During the Holocaust, six million Jewish men, women, and children were murdered in unspeakable conditions

in extermination camps. Hitler also killed millions of other innocent civilians including activists, people with disabilities, LGBT people, and people of Roma heritage. Another seven million people, including Poles and Ukrainians, were forced into slave labor as part of the German war machine. Underground resistance movements grew up in countries occupied by Germany, and in some cases with support from Great Britain.

Great Britain stood almost alone against Germany in the early part of the war, suffering military defeats and the harrowing bombing of London and other English cities. Although Germany and the Soviet Union had initially formed a cooperation pact, Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. Later that year, the United States entered the global conflict after Japan, which was aligned with Germany and Italy as an Axis power, attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. By the end of 1941, the United States was at war with Japan, Germany, and Italy.

Great Britain now had help in the fight against Hitler in Europe, but the United States needed time to recruit, train, and produce the massive amount of vehicles, ammunition, and equipment necessary to mount a direct attack on Germany, which had built up such a strong defense the European continent became known as Fortress Europe.

In the meantime, throughout 1942 and 1943, in addition to fighting the war against Japan in the Pacific, the United States joined with Great Britain to try to weaken Germany and Italy in North Africa and in the Mediterranean. In November 1942, the

Allies launched their first joint operation, codenamed Torch, in North Africa. Part of the goal was to control the Suez Canal in order to obtain a supply of oil from the Middle East to produce gasoline for tanks, trucks, ships, and planes. In addition, Operation Torch sought to weaken German forces fighting in the area, and eventually move Allied troops northward to invade Sicily and push the Germans from the mainland of Italy.

Under the direction of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, more than 100,000 troops conducted amphibious landings in November 1942 near Casablanca, Morocco, and the Mediterranean coast of Algeria, forcing the withdrawal of German troops, and leaving North Africa in Allied control by May 1943.

When Roosevelt and Churchill met at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, they decided their next target would be Sicily, in order to take advantage of Allied victories in the Mediterranean. Codenamed Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily, again under the command of Eisenhower, was launched in July 1943. On July 25, the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini was arrested.

The Sicilian campaign paved the way for the successful Allied invasion of Italy in September 1943. By October, the Allies controlled most of southern Italy. They then engaged in a long, drawn-out series of battles with German forces in Italy until May 1945, which turned into what historian Carlo D'Este called a "bloody stalemate."

Perhaps war correspondent Ernie Pyle put it best: "The war in Italy was tough. The land and the weather were both against

us. It rained and it rained. Vehicles bogged down and temporary bridges washed out. The country was shockingly beautiful, and just as shockingly hard to capture from the enemy.”

Even as Allied leaders undertook these campaigns, they were fully aware that if an invasion of France and northern Europe were to take place in 1944, preparations couldn't be delayed. And so in March 1943, General Frederick Morgan was asked to begin planning Operation Overlord.

The ultimate goal of Overlord was clear and uncompromising: “the utter defeat of Germany.” From the outset, planners knew the enemy wouldn’t be surrendering anywhere near the coast of France. The Allies would need to break through Hitler’s Atlantic Wall of coastal defenses—sea mines, gun emplacements, beach obstacles, and troops.

To win, they’d have to break out of occupied France and pursue the Germans deep into Europe. In other words, the initial airborne and the cross-channel amphibious assault (a part of Overlord codenamed Operation Neptune), was only the first step. Overlord was expected to be a long campaign involving two million soldiers battling their way seven hundred miles to Berlin.

For this reason, Overlord would require a reliable, uninterrupted flow of troops, vehicles, and supplies over a long period of time. (And although planners didn’t know it then, it would take eleven months—and more than three hundred days of hard fighting—before Germany surrendered in May 1945.)

With that in mind, Morgan and the Overlord planners knew it was imperative to choose the best invasion site they could find. Two possibilities had already been identified: the Pas-de-Calais region in northern France and the Caen-Cotentin area of Normandy. Calais, a major port since the Middle Ages, had some obvious advantages. It was the closest city to England, an easy reach separated only by the narrow Strait of Dover.

Yet since it was the most obvious spot to anyone looking at a map (including the Germans), Calais was heavily defended.

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And so the Overlord planning staff turned their attention farther south, to the coast of Normandy.

This region offered an element of surprise and had fewer German defensive fortifications than Calais. The landings could be followed quickly by the capture of the port of Cherbourg on nearby Cotentin Peninsula. Also, the beaches would be well suited to the massive buildup of equipment and vehicles that would immediately follow the amphibious landings.

Plans barreled forward during the summer of 1943. Morgan met his deadline to present the British Chiefs of Staff an outline in July. Then, in August, when President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King met secretly in Quebec, Canada, they adopted the Overlord plan and approved the May 1 invasion date.

As for the Supreme Commander—there still wasn't one. Even so, troops had to be trained, vehicles and landing craft readied, equipment and ammunition secured. Thousands of complicated logistical problems had to be solved.

“The stop-watch,” Frederick Morgan said, “was already ticking.”

BRIEFING

A Preposterous Idea: Mulberry Harbors

A port. They needed a port.

A reliable supply line was essential for Allied forces to break out of Normandy, liberate Paris, and pursue the enemy into Germany. As naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison put it, “if momentum is not maintained, an amphibious operation bogs down.” In other words, troops could be stranded—and forced to retreat without the supplies, ammunition, and food they needed.

However, the Allies knew that Hitler had paid close attention to defending port towns, and they couldn’t count on capturing Cherbourg immediately. It would also take time and heavy equipment to get its harbor functioning again. It was a given that the Germans had laid mines and sunk ships to make it unusable.

And so Frederick Morgan and his team faced what seemed an impasse: “Without at least one port in the first few days . . . the thing was just not on.”

Not on. But it *had* to be on. Morgan recalled a meeting one hot summer day as planners tried to grapple with “this immense puzzle.” A Royal Navy representative, Commodore John Hughes-Hallet, joked, “Well, all I can say is, if we can’t capture a port, we must take one with us.”

Take one with us? It sounded incredible, but maybe it wasn’t. And when the team members revisited the notion the next day,

they decided: "There might be something in this apparently preposterous idea."

And so the British designed and secretly built the Mulberries, two artificial harbors that could be taken along on the invasion. The Mulberries would be placed off the coast of Normandy to create sheltered water and a docking area. "Mulberry A" would ultimately serve the two American beaches (codenamed Omaha and Utah), "Mulberry B" the three British and Canadian landing sites (Sword, Juno, and Gold). The term Mulberry was simply a code name chosen at random.

What began as an offhand remark and a preposterous idea turned into reality—and a spectacular engineering feat that became a key factor in the invasion's success.

LOOK, LISTEN, REMEMBER: To read more about Mulberry harbors visit <http://d-dayrevisited.co.uk/d-day/mulberry-harbour.html>.

CHAPTER 2



INVASION PREPARATION: TOY SOLDIERS COME TO LIFE

All my life I had wanted to go to England,” said David Kenyon Webster. David had been a Harvard student and aspiring writer before volunteering as an army paratrooper.

As a little boy, he’d worn button shoes like Christopher Robin. He’d grown up reading British adventure stories like *Robin Hood* and *Kidnapped*. “When I played with toy soldiers they were English: sturdy, kilted Scotchman running with fixed bayonets; tall, bright-red guardsmen on parade.

“Finally, in September, 1943, I did go to England. I was a little boy no longer. The toy soldiers had come to life; I was one of them.”

David was one of thousands—hundreds of thousands—of American soldiers in England in the preinvasion months. By January 1944, it’s estimated there were nearly 750,000 U.S. troops in the United Kingdom, most in eleven divisions, with 15,000 to 20,000 men in each. This number would double by D-Day.

The troops included sailors, soldiers, and airmen. Racial prejudice in the military barred African Americans from

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combat positions, and it wouldn't be until July 26, 1948, that President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981 desegregating the military. Nevertheless, African Americans played a critical part in the D-Day invasion and the war in Europe. One historian estimates that of the 1.5 million American servicemen in Great Britain in June, about 134,000 were African Americans. "More than 60 percent of all general service regiments, dump truck companies, truck drivers, and ordnance units were black."

Although exact figures vary, D-Day itself would involve a landing force of some 156,000 Allied military personnel from the United States, England, and Canada. (Additionally, there were some troops from Free France and Norway who had managed to flee their homelands and were serving alongside British forces. Remnants of the Royal Norwegian Navy had also evacuated. According to the Royal Norwegian Navy Museum, about ten Norwegian vessels were part of Operation Neptune.) The invasion also involved about 11,500 aircraft, including 867 gliders. The assault deployed nearly 7,000 ships, including 4,126 landing ships and smaller landing craft.

But those are just numbers. Like David, each soldier and sailor was an individual who had left family, friends, and loved ones behind. The going away was not easy.

"You know those orders are coming. Yet no one is ever prepared for them when they do come," wrote John Mason Brown. He was a well-known drama critic in his early forties when he volunteered in 1942 as a naval officer on the staff of

Admiral Alan Kirk. (Kirk would serve as the senior naval commander for the Western Task Force of the invasion, in charge of landing Americans on two beaches.)

Brown went on, “The Invasion, which is so many things, is also a mountain range of orders; hence of farewells, of empty places at the table, of incomplete Christmases, uncelebrated anniversaries, untaken weekends, and of changed lives here, there, and on the way over.”

The journey itself across the Atlantic was fraught with danger. Troops crossed in all kinds of ships. There were convoys and transports sailing under navy protection from prowling U-Boats (German submarines).

Americans also came, Brown noted, “on heavy freighters dipping under breakers, in postcard weather or through black, wintery waters . . . on large ships that race alone, on cruisers, battleships and vessels loaded with explosives.”

Watching this influx, Brown said that it made him realize that “to invade Europe we would have to invade England first.”

It wasn’t just soldiers arriving in England in the months before D-Day, but a mind-boggling inventory of supplies: “our tanks; our jeeps, our stretchers . . . our camouflage and our small stores; our typewriters, our desks . . . our bedding and most of our food.”

The French word *matériel* is used to describe military equipment and materials. And production of matériel for this massive undertaking was only possible because of an



African Americans fought discrimination to break into combat positions late in the war. Throughout, they played critical roles in specialized support units and in war production.



Women war workers at a shipbuilding plant.

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extraordinary production effort. More than twelve million American men joined the military during the war, including about nine hundred thousand African Americans and about three hundred and fifty thousand women. With so many men gone, the resulting labor shortage was filled by women.

Six and a half million American women went to work during the war years, filling jobs in factories and shipyards once held by men. During the war years, factories produced machines and equipment on an unprecedented scale. As just one example, in the first three months of 1944, more than 600 C-47 aircraft that would be used to carry paratroopers into Normandy were delivered to an airfield in Fort Wayne, Indiana. From there, crews flew them to England, where they would enter intensive training. By April 1944, there were more than 1,000 of these troop carrier planes in England ready to go.

This accelerated war production was made possible through what Secretary of War Henry L. Stanton called “the vast reserve of woman power.” African American men, who faced discrimination in the military and were essentially barred from combat service, also formed a key part of the civilian and military workforce.

Once the vehicles, planes, landing craft, invasion supplies, and



people arrived in England, they needed to be accommodated. John Mason Brown observed, “As we Americans moved in, the British had no other choice than to move over, which is no easy thing to do in your own house.”

But they did it. And there was something else, Brown thought, that would lead to success. The British most certainly needed the Americans, but the Americans needed the British, too. After all, the British people had been standing up to the Nazis since 1940. Thousands of soldiers had already died in the war effort. An estimated 40,000 British civilians had also been killed during Germany’s bombing raids in England known as the Blitz.

“Had they not stood alone, we might not have been able to stand at all,” Brown said. “We were both the stronger when we stood side by side.”

BRIEFING

African Americans in World War II

During World War II, American society, including the U.S. military, was still very much segregated, and opportunities and rights for African Americans were severely limited.

Albert E. Cowdrey at the U.S. Army Center of Military History has observed that “For American blacks the war was a time of paradox. The fight against Hitler’s homicidal racism was one in which they had a special interest . . . It was also a time of disappointment and growing anger, for the nation failed to integrate its armed forces or grant genuine equality to blacks in uniform.”

Although Benjamin Oliver Davis Sr. had become the army’s first black general in October 1940, African Americans were not allowed in combat roles until late in the war, and then in a very limited capacity. Overall, more blacks than whites were turned down for the draft.

In another example, black medical personnel seeking to join the navy were turned away. Several thousand black physicians had formed the National Medical Association (NMA), since in many parts of the country African American doctors were excluded from the American Medical Association. In 1940, the NMA formed a committee to lobby for a role in the war effort. Cowdrey notes that “The navy was polite but firm. Except as mess personnel it had no use for any blacks and consequently

none for black doctors. The army was more forthcoming." Promises were made to use black physicians with all-black units.

Similarly, while the army gave commissions to about five hundred African American nurses during the war, the navy only gave four. The situation for nurses began to improve slightly over the course of the war, thanks to the efforts of such organizations as the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN), which had the support of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

As a result of systemic racism, in the first years of the war, African Americans in the military were largely limited to noncombat service positions such as engineers, logistics, or transportation, or segregated support units.

According to the National World War II Museum, "By 1945, however, troop losses virtually forced the military to begin placing more African American troops into positions as infantrymen, pilots, tankers, medics, and officers in increasing numbers."

This included the 761st Tank Battalion, which distinguished itself with General George S. Patton, spending more than 180 days in combat. The "Tuskegee Airmen" of the 332nd Fighter Group have become legendary, flying over 15,000 missions. And in Italy beginning in the late summer of 1944, the 92nd Infantry Division battled the enemy in treacherous terrain, earning a reputation for toughness.

Daniel Inouye, the late, beloved senator from Hawai'i (and the highest-ranking Asian American politician in U.S. history) fought in Italy with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, primarily made up of Japanese Americans. Grievously wounded, Inouye would eventually lose his right arm.

He once shared a special memory of the African American soldiers of the 92nd from his experience in a field hospital. "I remember a nurse showing me a bottle of blood. It had a name on it—Thomas Jefferson Smith, 92nd Division—and while they were rigging it for transfusion . . . I realized that fighting men did more than fight, that they cared enough about each other and the men assigned to their sector to donate their blood for the time when somebody would need it to sustain life," he once said, adding his thanks "to every man in the 92nd Division who donated blood that helped save my life."

In December 1944, facing a shortage of replacement infantry troops in Europe, the U.S. Army called for volunteers to fill infantry positions. The call was opened to all races. About 5,000 African American men volunteered, and 2,500 were accepted, forming fifty-three platoons (led by white officers).

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which called on all American armed forces to provide equal treatment and opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

Faced with this discrimination, some African Americans walked away at the recruiting door. The eminent historian Dr. John Hope Franklin once described his attempt to volunteer for an office position with the U.S. Navy.

When he was asked about his skills, Dr. Franklin replied that he could type, manage an office, and take shorthand. And then he added, "And, oh, yes, I have a Ph.D. in history from Harvard."

“The recruiter then said, ‘You have everything but [the right] color.’”

Dr. Franklin replied, “‘Well, I thought there was an emergency, but obviously there’s not, so I bid you a good day.’”

“And I vowed that day that they would not get me, because they did not deserve me. If I was able—physically, mentally, every other kind of way, able and willing to serve my country—and my country turned me down on the basis of color, then my country did not deserve me.”

LOOK, LISTEN, REMEMBER: To read more about African Americans in the army in World War II, including six soldiers who were (eventually) awarded the Medal of Honor, visit the U.S. Army Center of Military History: <http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/afam/index.html>. Additional resources about African Americans in World War II are listed in the Quartermaster’s Department at the back.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Fog, Blackouts, and Courage

In the early months of 1944, American newspaper journalist Richard L. Tobin crossed the Atlantic to cover the war from London. After just one day at sea, thick North Atlantic fog forced the troop transport ship he was sailing on to stop and wait it out.

The engines were shut off. Danger seemed to lurk all around them. At any moment, the ship could be attacked by marauding German U-Boats.

“In war, one does not use a foghorn; yet we are in the convoy lanes and collision is a momentary threat,” Tobin wrote. “The bows of one freight ship after another, bound empty for America, can be seen emerging from the fog, sometimes as close as one hundred and fifty feet away. The ghostly ships come from all angles.

“Idling troop ships are like sitting ducks to hunters. But where a hunter won’t shoot a sitting duck, a U-Boat or a German will shoot at anything.”



In London, Tobin found living conditions far worse than in America. Meat and vegetables were in short supply. Although beef was nearly impossible to get, horsemeat could be had at a shilling a pound—if you could bear to eat it. And as for the meat: Not all the meat was, well, meat.

"The sausages are a joke, filled with sawdust," Tobin said. "Meat is rationed to one decent meal a week. The rest of the time you gulp down flat, doughy mouthfuls that defy identity."

The worst part for the American, though, was getting used to severe blackout conditions. It made Tobin realize how much the British people had endured since September 1940, when German bombers first began their attacks.

"The blackout comes increasingly late, and thank God for it. For when the blackout comes (in winter as early as 3:30 in the afternoon) the bombers come, or at any rate the threat of death," he said. "The blackness is a shroud dropped upon the shoulders of ten millions, the largest city in the world, as completely as the lid on a coffin or the cap on a well."

One night the reporter walked home from his office in that darkness. "This is a timeless world, this black world of mine, for I am the only one in it as I walk. The other shadows are in worlds of their own . . . Only at night in the blackout am I afraid as a child is afraid, afraid of unknown things."

Even though attacks had lessened, many people still slept on underground platforms of London's Tube, or subway. "There, indeed, they sleep, they eat, they talk, and somehow live their nights in an atmosphere of smells, bad air, mosquitoes, infection and unending noise," said Tobin. "Tube sleepers reached a peak on September 27, 1940, at the pinnacle of the blitz. As many as 177,000 Londoners slept far below ground that night . . .

"It took real courage to stand it."