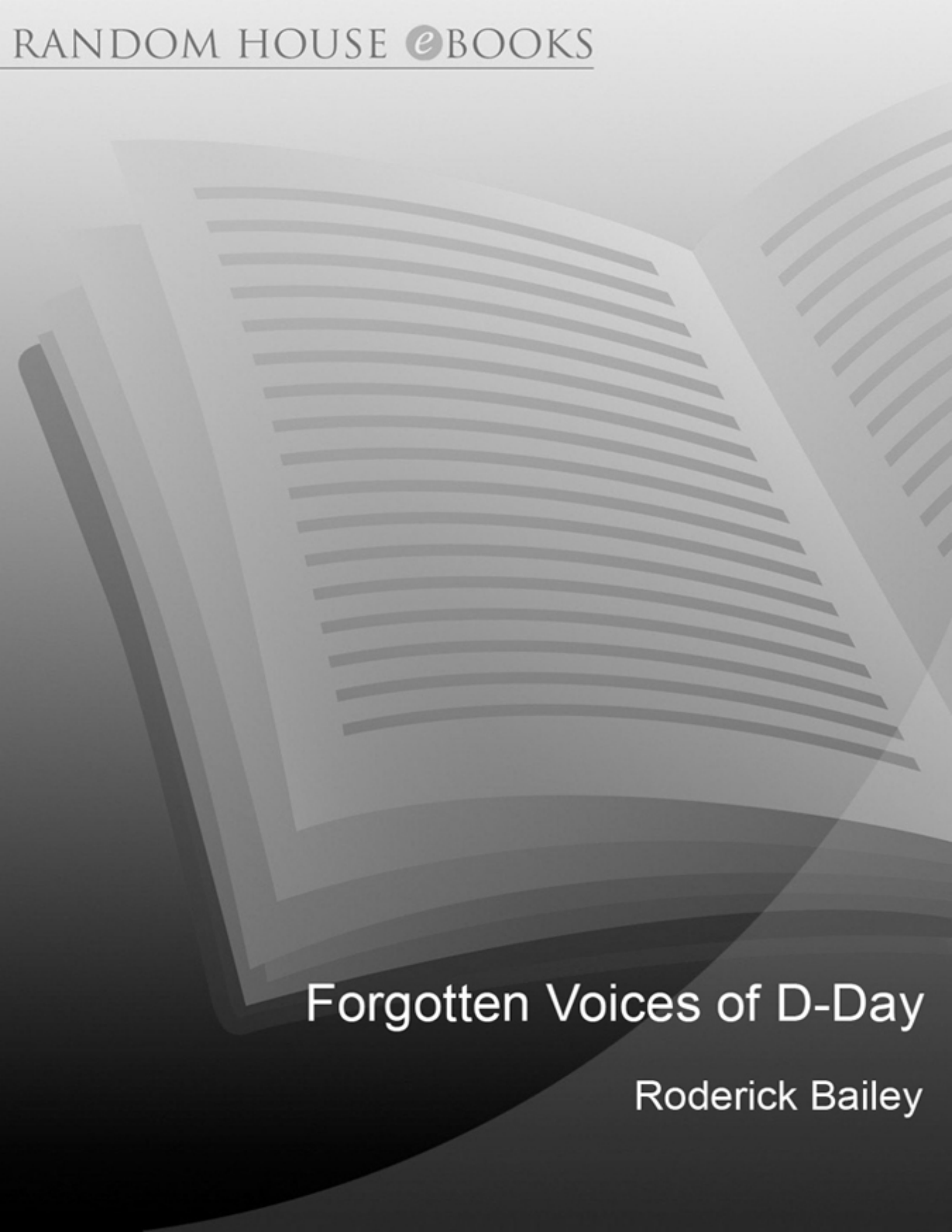


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Forgotten Voices of D-Day

Roderick Bailey

Contents

Cover

About the Book

About the Author

Also in the series

Title Page

Author's Preface

Introduction by Winston S. Churchill

Build-up

Plans and Preliminaries; Deception and Destruction; Allies; Tools and Training; Operation Tiger: The Slapton Sands Disaster

Countdown

The Camps; Delay and Decision; The Crossing; Final Touches

Airborne Assault

Coup de Main; The Arrival of the Sixth Airborne; The 5th Parachute Brigade; The 3rd Parachute Brigade

Seaborne Assault

Bombing and Bombardment; Sword Beach; Juno Beach; Gold Beach; Omaha Beach; Utah Beach

Pushing Inland

Reaching the Airborne; The Drive on Caen; The Push for

Bayeux

Holding On

The Orne Bridgehead; The 6th Airlanding Brigade; Lion-sur-Mer

Day's End

Glossary

Index of Contributors

General Index

Acknowledgements

Copyright

About the Book

6 June 1944: the day Allied forces crossed the Channel and began fighting their way into Nazi-occupied north-west Europe. Initiated by glider units and covered by air and naval bombardment, the Normandy landings were the most ambitious combined airborne and amphibious assault ever attempted. Their success marked the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany.

Drawing on thousands of hours of eyewitness testimony recorded by the Imperial War Museum, *Forgotten Voices of D-Day* tells us the story of the landings in the words of those who were there.

With accounts ranging from memories of the daring capture of 'Pegasus' bridge by British glider-borne troops to brutal fighting as the assault forces stormed the beaches, this is a powerful and important new record of a defining moment in modern history.

About the Author

A graduate of Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities and a former Alistair Horne Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford, Roderick Bailey is a historian attached to the Imperial War Museum. He is the author of *Forgotten Voices of D-Day*, *Forgotten Voices of the Secret War*, which was a *Sunday Times* Top Ten bestseller, and the acclaimed *The Wildest Province: SOE in the Land of the Eagle*.

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FORGOTTEN VOICES OF D-DAY

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE
IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

RODERICK BAILEY



EBURY
PRESS

Author's Preface

On the morning of Tuesday, 6 June 1944, Allied forces began landing on the northern coast of Nazi-occupied France. The first airborne troops arrived by parachute and glider just minutes after midnight; by dawn, a vast seaborne assault force was fighting its way ashore. The Normandy landings, the largest, most complex and ambitious operation of their type ever attempted, were a turning point in the Second World War. The long-awaited Second Front had opened and the liberation of Western Europe had begun.

Drawing on the Sound Archive records of London's Imperial War Museum, this book is concerned with the British contribution to D-Day. It is a compilation of eyewitness testimonies and impressions, of personal and personalised accounts of episodes that occurred on that day and during the long months of preparation that preceded it.

One of the greatest strengths of the museum's vast collection is that it includes accounts from men and women whose experiences are not widely known yet are rich in unusual and unexpected detail. So, against Lord Mountbatten's memories of the early problems faced by the most senior of planners, we have the recollections, for example, of a young WAAF aircraftwoman who packed parachutes in the run-up to D-Day and worried about the consequences of doing too many too quickly. Royal Navy seamen speak of the disastrous night in April 1944 when German E-boats caused havoc and heavy casualties among

American landing craft training off Slapton Sands in Devon: a hushed-up episode that remained little known for decades. A conscientious objector describes his work as a parachute medic who dropped before dawn into Normandy. Here, too, is the modest account of the only man to win a Victoria Cross on D-Day.

Some of the most important and powerful testimonies come from Royal Navy officers and seamen caught up in the terrible carnage of Omaha Beach, where American troops went ashore in the face of fierce enemy opposition. The fact that British personnel were present and did important work on Omaha rarely features in histories of the day's events there.

Perhaps the most poignant account is that left by Tom Treanor, a war correspondent. Treanor was an American – the only one quoted in this book – and his description of going ashore on Utah beach was recorded for broadcast just hours after his return from Normandy on the night of 6 June. He was killed two months later when his jeep was crushed by an Allied tank on a road north of Paris.

Given the snapshot-style of the *Forgotten Voices* series and the nature of oral history, this book cannot of course touch on every aspect of D-Day. What it can do is shed light on the vast and varied range of roles performed by British civilians and servicemen during the long build-up period and on D-Day itself, and raise the voices of men and women whose testimonies might otherwise go unheard. By underlining Britain's contribution in this way – in the words and through the experiences of individual participants – the book may also help to restore some balance to the popular image of D-Day. As it has been portrayed in recent films and non-fiction, that image does not always give the British the credit and attention they deserve.

Roderick Bailey, January 2009

Introduction by Winston S. Churchill

Few, who visit the military cemeteries of Normandy, can fail to be moved by the row upon row of gleaming Portland stone memorials, standing in silent witness to the heroism and sacrifice of the British, Commonwealth and American soldiers, who laid down their lives that Europe might be free. However often one may visit them, it is impossible to come away from these often vast, always immaculately maintained, British and American war cemeteries without feelings of sadness, of gratitude, but also of intense pride. One cannot help but reflect on these young men - average age in their early twenties, but some mere teenagers fresh out of school - whose lives were so cruelly cut short in the flower of their youth. In the words of the Kohima epitaph: 'For your tomorrow, we gave our today'.

Unlike the American crosses with name, age and rank, the British war graves often carry messages from 'mum and dad', a wife or a sweetheart, in addition. None could be more poignant than the tribute I came across from the parents of a nineteen-year-old, who had died on D-Day:

To the World he was One ...
To Us he was the World

But *Forgotten Voices of D-Day* brings to life, with a brilliance, vividness and immediacy, the memories and experiences, the thoughts and humour, of so many of their comrades, who came through the ordeal, and lived to tell the tale.

Roderick Bailey, a distinguished historian and former Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellow has, with this work, done signal service to the memory and heroism of those who took part in the greatest seaborne and airborne invasion of history, only a dwindling band of whom are still with us today.

This work would never have been possible but for the foresight and painstaking effort of the Imperial War Museum which, over many decades, has recorded the oral testimony of many hundreds of the participants in these dramatic events, which moulded the course of history and paved the way directly for the downfall of the Third Reich – participants of every rank, from the Montys, Mountbattens and Ikes down to the humblest, or not so humble, private soldier. Through it all, the courage, camaraderie and humour of the ordinary British ‘Tommy’ comes shining through.

The D-Day invasion involved an armada of nearly 7,000 warships and landing-craft, while in the air more than 11,000 aircraft participated. By nightfall, some 132,715 Allied troops had been put ashore. Hollywood revels in depicting D-Day and the ensuing Battle of Normandy, in movies such as *Saving Private Ryan* or *Band of Brothers*, as an overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, American affair. Indeed in the former, the only reference to British involvement was a curt: ‘Where are Monty’s boys – they’re late!’ But the reality was rather different. As these pages make clear, even on Omaha Beach, the Royal Navy played a vital, though unsung, part in getting the Americans ashore.

Overall, the number of British troops – including from the British Dominions and Commonwealth – who landed on the beaches and landing-grounds of Normandy on D-Day, was equal to that of the Americans. Only beyond the end of June 1944 did the number of US troops in action worldwide begin to surpass that of Britain and her Commonwealth,

which had borne the burden for nearly five long, painful years of war.

How easy it is with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, with which we are all endowed, to believe in the inevitability of historical events. We therefore *know* that the invasion was bound to succeed. But that was certainly not how it appeared to the decision-makers of the day, most especially to the British prime minister, Winston Churchill, who harboured searing memories of the disaster that had attended the British, Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) and French forces as they attempted to land, nearly thirty years earlier, on the beaches of the Gallipoli peninsula. As they waded ashore, they were caught by underwater obstacles and barbed-wire entanglements, while being raked by withering machine gun fire from the entrenched and well prepared Turkish defenders. Some battalions suffered 70 per cent casualties and Allied casualties, up to the moment they were forced to evacuate nine months later in January 1917, totalled 252,000.

On invasion-eve, the night of 5 June 1944, the Prime Minister dined alone with his wife, before making his way to the Map Room to examine the final dispositions for the attack. As Sir Martin Gilbert records in his official biography (Vol. VII, p. 794):

Shortly before she went to bed, Clementine Churchill joined him in the Map Room. 'Do you realize,' Churchill said to her, 'that by the time you wake up in the morning twenty thousand men may have been killed?'

In the event - thanks in large measure to successful deception and surprise, combined with masterly preparation - Allied casualties on D-Day were nothing like as grave as Churchill had feared. They amounted to no more than 10,000, which included 2,500 dead - a mere

tenth of those of the British Army who died on on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

By the end of June, over 850,000 Allied soldiers had been put ashore and were engaged in the Battle of Normandy, which cost 209,000 Allied casualties, including more than 53,000 dead.

So long as the British and American nations endure, the feats of these ordinary men who, in the face of unbelievable danger, performed extraordinary acts of heroism to liberate Europe from the scourge of Fascism, will live for ever in the hearts and memories of a grateful people.

Build-up

A seaborne landing on a heavily defended enemy coast is about the most hazardous operation of all.

I think everybody was terribly aware of this all the time.

PLANNING FOR D-DAY began years before the invasion took place. Indeed, British thinking about ways and means of returning to the Continent started almost as soon as the British Army had been evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940. From the start, however, British planners were faced with a paucity of resources. Serious planning for an invasion became feasible after the United States entered the war in December 1941; only then, with the input of American men, material and expertise, did an invasion of Western Europe seem possible.

By the end of 1943, the Normandy coast had been identified as offering the best chance of a successful landing, and a massive invasion force, mostly of American, British and Canadian troops, was assembling in Britain. By then, too, the senior commanders for the operation had been appointed. An American, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, was placed in overall charge as Supreme Commander. Britons had the next senior roles. As head of 21st Army Group, General Sir Bernard Montgomery was put in charge of all ground forces to be used in the invasion. Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay and Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory would command

the Allied naval and air forces respectively. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder was appointed Eisenhower's deputy.

Between them and their subordinate officers, the final plan for the invasion was settled. The night before D-Day, a vast armada of ships carrying the seaborne invasion force was to cross the Channel, drop anchor off the Normandy coast and prepare to land the troops after dawn. Two American airborne divisions would land by parachute and glider to secure the invasion's western flank, while one British airborne division would go in to secure the eastern flank. Preceded by a heavy air and naval bombardment of the enemy's defences, the seaborne force of six Allied infantry divisions - three American, two British and one Canadian - would then land on five pre-selected beaches. By the end of the day, it was hoped, five beachheads would be established, four beachheads would be linked and the troops would have started to make good progress inland. The invasion was code-named Overlord. Its initial phase - the establishment of a firm foothold on the Normandy coast - was code-named Neptune.

Throughout the months running up to D-Day, elaborate measures were taken to confuse and mislead the Germans as to the intended invasion point and to complicate the enemy's ability to react when the landings came. Considerable thought was given to developing methods of getting safely and effectively ashore and breaching Hitler's defensive Atlantic Wall, the feared barrier of anti-invasion obstacles, batteries, bunkers, minefields and fortifications which the Germans had built and sewn along the entire coast of northern France. Among the most innovative devices were General Sir Percy Hobart's 'Funnies' - specialised vehicles designed to

clear and breach a host of different obstructions - and the Duplex-Drive (DD) amphibious tanks.

By the spring of 1944, preparations for the invasion were reaching a peak. Troops in training took part in several large-scale landing exercises; to assist them, a number of south coast villages were evacuated. These exercises were not always problem-free and the worst incident happened on 28 April, when German E-boats intercepted American landing craft training off the Devon coast.

PLANS AND PRELIMINARIES

Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten

Chief of Combined Operations, London, 1941-43

I was recalled from Pearl Harbor, where I was working with the American fleet temporarily, to take up the job in charge of Combined Operations by Mr Winston Churchill.

The very first day I reported to him, he said, 'You are to prepare for the invasion of Europe. For unless we can go and land and fight Hitler and beat his forces on land we shall never win this war. You must devise and design the appliances, the landing craft and the techniques to enable us to effect a landing against opposition and to maintain ourselves there. You must take the most brilliant officers from the navy, army and air force to help plan this great operation. You must take bases to use as training establishments where you can train the navy, army and air force to work as a single entity. The whole of the south coast of England is a bastion of defence against the invasion of Hitler: you've got to turn it into the springboard for our attack.'

This was October 1941, when the whole of our allies in Europe had been overrun and captured and conquered and the Russians looked like being defeated and the Americans

weren't in the war. What a hell of a decision to make: to prepare for the invasion then.

Then, when Churchill went over to meet President Roosevelt a week after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, they made their very brave decision: Europe first. We would beat the Nazis there before we crushed the Japanese, which, as the Japanese had just attacked them, was a courageous decision for the Americans. And when General Marshall came over to see the British chiefs of staff he was enthusiastic about the idea of taking part in this invasion which I'd been ordered to plan. But he didn't seem to be able to appreciate that we couldn't stage it as quickly as he had hoped. We hadn't got the landing craft or the other things to go with it, hadn't got the men trained.

Major Goronwy Rees

21st Army Group planning staff

As far as the planning was concerned, it was an essentially British operation. Of course we had American officers with us and they worked very closely with us but the original conception of the plan was a British one and the detailed planning of it was also, I would say, about ninety per cent British. Of course you had to learn to work with the Americans and this is not an easy thing. Their methods of planning and conducting war are really terribly different from ours.

I think the fundamental difference between the way we make war and the way the Americans make war is that we were always conscious of how very small our resources were. We knew, for instance, that if we lost a division it would mean a disaster to us. Whereas the Americans were quite prepared to produce another division, there was an infinite number of divisions in the pipeline, and they regarded people as expendable in a way that we didn't. Not only men, but also material. Our resources were very limited and we simply could not afford to waste things in

the way that the Americans could. On the other hand this had great advantages in the sense that the Americans produced material that was beyond our means and their engineering instruments could perform feats in a time and at a speed which we could never dream of.

Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten
Chief of Combined Operations, 1941-43

The absolutely crucial thing for an invasion is to get the troops across the water and for that you want landing ships and landing craft, and those we just didn't have. They had to be designed; they had to be built in large quantities at a time when all the shipbuilding facilities were required to fight the Battle of the Atlantic. But we managed to get permission to get smaller yards to start building the landing craft and then we started converting merchant ships to landing ships. And above all, when the Americans came in, I persuaded General Marshall right away to double all the orders I'd placed in America. That's how we built up the landing craft at a time when nobody wanted them to be built up.

Brigadier David Belchem
21st Army Group planning staff

The basic reason why Normandy was chosen starts with the air support requirements of the army. The preoccupation of the army is close support from the air. This is carried out by fighter-bombers and at this period of time the range of our fighter-bombers was very limited. Therefore, since there were not enough aircraft carriers, it meant that the air force had to operate from bases in the south of England. This in turn meant that the invasion area had to be chosen between a point somewhere between the south of Holland and the Belgian coast and what we call the Cherbourg Peninsula, which is called the Cotentin Peninsula in France. That was the beginning of the story because this defined

the length of coast on which you had to choose the point of assault.

Another part of the choice of Normandy was that you've got to have suitable beaches. You've got to have the possibility of getting straight inland and getting as far and as deep as you possibly can as quickly as possible. And you've got to defend, from immediate interruption, the follow-up forces arriving on the beach. This is why obviously you don't choose to land at the bottom of a cliff at Calais or Dieppe or where have you. And the plan for the subsequent development, of course, was partly dictated by the favourable nature of the zone of Normandy, because we could envisage a lodgement area from where we could get up to the Seine and the Loire. The armed forces would be grouped while more aircraft, installations, dumps and all the rest of it were brought in and ports opened and then you would get tidy and ready for the next stage, which was the advance on Berlin.

Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten
Chief of Combined Operations, 1941-43

The problem of staying ashore is a very difficult one because of the weather conditions in the Channel. You couldn't expect more than three or four consecutive days with weather fine enough to supply the beaches, so obviously we thought we'd have to take a port. That's why we tried Dieppe. But we found in Dieppe that we couldn't actually capture a port without using such heavy bombardment as would destroy the facilities we wanted to use, so the obvious thing was to bring our own artificial harbour with us, which we called Mulberry, and which everybody thought was absolutely crazy.

Brigadier Arthur Walter
21st Army Group planning staff

The bright boys, and they were British, entirely British, thought up the idea of an artificial harbour in which they built the pieces in England, towed them a hundred miles to the beaches and put them down piece by piece by piece like that. That was 1942. But it wasn't until the Quebec Conference in 1943 that Mr Churchill and the British chiefs of staff sold the idea to the Americans, that the only way you could have an invasion was by building an artificial harbour.

Brigadier Bruce White

Director of Ports and Inland Water Transport, War Office

After the Quebec Conference we went to Washington where the meeting for the Overlord programme was discussed and a final meeting was held at which General Marshall, who was Chief of the Combined Staff, went through the whole of the preparations that were being made for the invasion and turned to me asking whether the provisions in the form of Mulberry harbours could be accomplished in the time which was remaining. On this occasion I represented the UK and stated that this could be accomplished provided the Americans could supply us with timber, of which we had a shortage, and also tugs, of which we had an insufficiency. It was really a terrific shot in the dark, I might say. Coming back, I thought, 'My God, I'll get hung for this all right if it doesn't work.'



HU 1905

German photograph of knocked-out tanks and burning landing craft after the failed Allied raid on Dieppe, 19 August 1942.

I've often been asked why the word Mulberry was used in connection with the Mulberry harbours. The simple answer is that following my return from America I found on my table at the War Office a letter which had no security and was headed 'Artificial Harbours'. I felt this was a possibility where security might be broken and therefore approached the head of the security branch at the War Office and requested a meeting at which I explained the case, and the chairman asked me what I would like to be done. I said utilisation of a code word would give me the security I would wish for. Turning to the junior officer behind him, he asked what was the next name from the code book and the officer replied, 'Mulberry.'

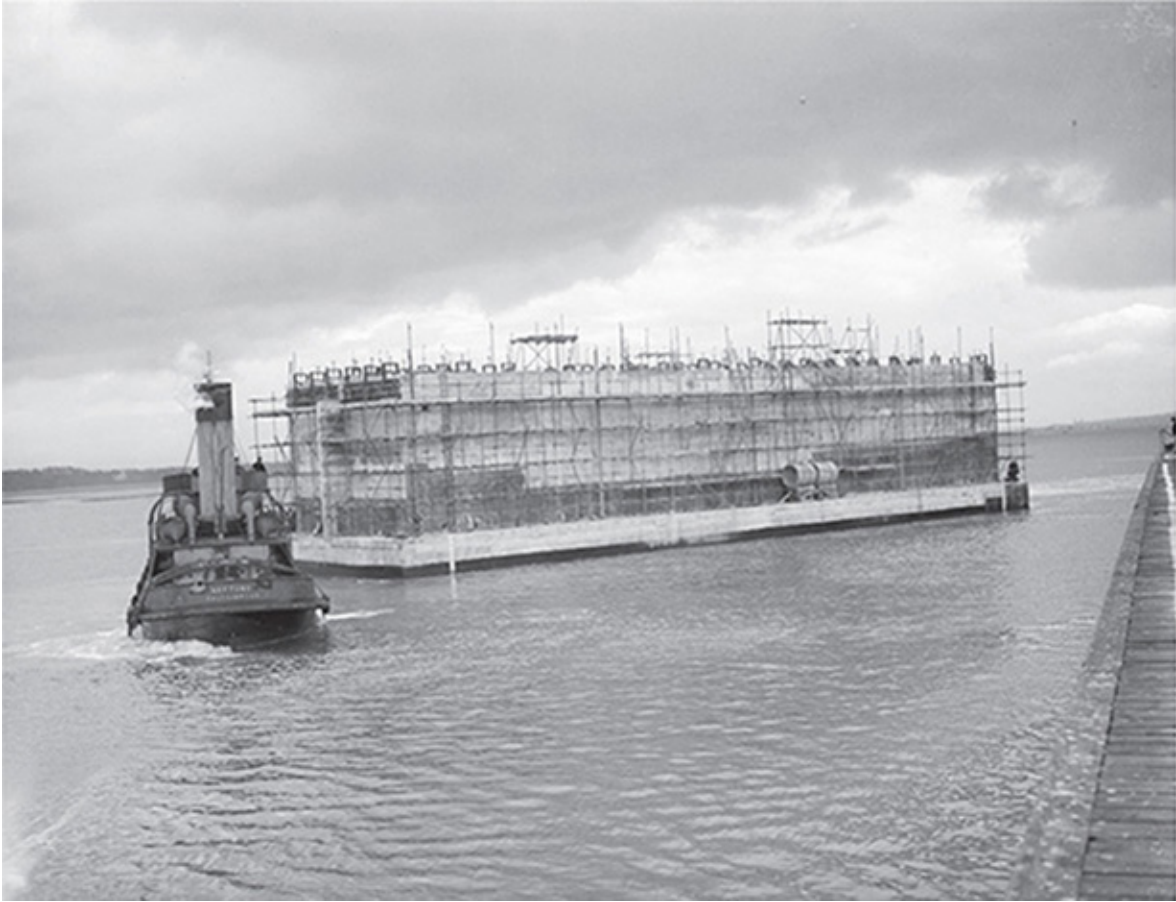
Captain Alan Adcock

Directorate of Ports and Inland Water Transport, War Office

The outer wall of the harbour was to be formed by large concrete caissons, which were of course to be constructed

in this country and towed across and sunk in line. They were some two hundred feet long and the biggest ones were sixty feet high and fifty-six feet wide or thereabouts. The design and construction of these was really a prodigious work; 147 of them were built and hadn't even been designed before the beginning of October 1943. And they were designed and built and floated round to the south coast ready for D-Day between then and April 1944: seven months.

The construction was handled by a special department set up by the Ministry of Supply which was staffed not by civil servants but by men drawn from the big contractors' offices who were used to handling supply and organisation of construction work. It was headed by Jack Gibson of Pauling, one of the big contractors of that day; he was knighted for his effort. And he managed to persuade, somehow or other, twenty-four of the big contractors of the day, including many that are still well known, people like McAlpine and Costain, Bovis and Taylor Woodrow and so on, to take part in this construction.



A 25799

A concrete Phoenix caisson being towed by a tug to an assembly point prior to D-Day. The plan was for each caisson to be towed to the Normandy shore after D-Day, where it would be flooded until it settled on the seabed, forming a section of the breakwater of a Mulberry harbour.

I might say that there were one or two contractors who were approached to do it and they refused because they said it couldn't possibly be done in the time and the whole scheme would be a complete flop. But twenty-four of them did agree to do it and they were allocated sites all over the country, and the Ministry of Supply was given wide powers to get materials and labour and they actually got a few men released from the forces to go back to their old firms to help with the construction. But it was a miracle that it was all done in the time.

Major Goronwy Rees
21st Army Group planning staff

We'd had to plan for a long time without knowing who's going to carry out the plans and at last General Eisenhower was made Supreme Allied Commander and General Montgomery was appointed to command the operation in its first days. And Monty came back with the huge prestige of Alamein behind him and with all his boys with sand in their boots and bush shirts and God knows what.

Sergeant Frank Higgins

Royal Military Police

I was stationed with a detachment at St Paul's School, Hammersmith, when it was the General Headquarters of the Home Forces. Our particular duty was the safeguarding of the Commander-in-Chief. Montgomery joined us in January 1944 and our detachment of Military Police then took over the duties of accompanying him on his visits and the security of his mess and his own quarters which were in a block of flats in Hammersmith.

There was always one of us on duty at his flat and, in the case of evening meals, one of us would always be on duty at the mess because invariably there would be entertaining of various officers and staff officers from the navy and the air force. There was always one policeman attached to him when he journeyed from the flat to the headquarters itself and one policeman was always stood by at headquarters while he was there in case he was required. And it fell to us to do security checks on entering the headquarters: examining passes and credentials of visiting officers. Unless it happened to be your day's leave you were bound to come across him during the day.

I think his black beret and his two badges, the dress that he assumed, rather brought him out as a bit of a showman. When you saw him in his service dress and his ordinary red tabs and brass hat he looked a totally different person. In his beret and his battledress he always seemed to look more military and more commanding than ever he did in

his service dress. With his battledress and his beret he stood out a mile.

He was a great showman. He loved show; he really loved it. I'd never seen him more happy, actually, than when we visited factories. They always said that Monty wasn't a woman's man but the ladies in factories really used to go mad about him and he seemed to lap it up. There again, it was his showman's abilities that brought that on. He really loved the crowd.

A lot of people didn't like him, didn't like his manner. He was very brusque and curt in his way of speaking. The high-pitched voice always made him appear to be talking down to one and although I don't think it was his manner it was just the way that one took it.

General Eisenhower I found a very likeable person. I did come across him quite a bit, especially after we'd moved to Portsmouth. I did a lot of night duty at Portsmouth and Eisenhower seemed to be spending a lot of time in London and he used to arrive back in the early hours of the morning, showing very fully all his credentials even though no one could mistake him. He was always very nice. If he came in of an evening and we'd be there, he'd have a little talk with you, pass some comments on London or somewhere where he'd been. It used to break the monotony for someone in that position to talk to a lowly sergeant, as it were. It was always quite nice to have a chat with him.

Brigadier David Belchem
21st Army Group planning staff

There arose differences between Montgomery and Eisenhower from time to time. Eisenhower was a political general whereas Montgomery was a cold, calculating, ruthless combat general. It's very seldom that a general is both of these categories at the same time. The combat man sweeps aside any factor other than those concerned with

helping to win the war as quickly as possible with the minimum of casualties. The political general has a rather different task. He's dealing, shall we say, with public opinion, problems in England and the United States. He's dealing with the statesmen - he's dealing with Roosevelt, with Churchill, with de Gaulle - and things of this kind. He's also concerned with holding together a team which inevitably includes a number of personalities who could be difficult. In this case he's concerned with Bradley, Patton, Montgomery, the air commanders, sometimes 'Bomber' Harris. Therefore he cannot always agree with the much more direct approach of the combat general and this obviously at times caused differences of opinion.

Lieutenant Charles Mills

Naval planning staff

There was tremendous expectancy and always confidence, perhaps more confidence, when Monty arrived to take command of the land forces in the Allied landings and it then went from three, what we called assault areas, to five. He said that three wasn't enough, this wasn't good enough, and he went to the Chiefs of Staff and he said there must be five.

Brigadier David Belchem

21st Army Group planning staff

With Montgomery the primary principle of war was concentration. When you've chosen the right point you put every mortal thing you've got into that area.

Major Patrick Barrass

2nd Battalion, Essex Regiment

Monty decided to put two more divisions in and the Airborne, thank God. I mean, if it had only been three divisions we'd have been boxed in and pushed back into the sea again without any trouble at all.

DECEPTION AND DESTRUCTION

Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten ***Chief of Combined Operations, 1941-43***

To prevent the enemy from building up reinforcements so quickly that they could push you back into the sea, you have to do two things. First, you had to have a deception plan, to make the enemy think you're going to land somewhere else and make him build up all his reinforcements and his defences there. That was easy in our case. It obviously was the Pas de Calais, the straits of Dover, the shortest way across. Not only did all the German generals think we were going to go there but all the British generals wanted to go there. Secondly, having got them all concentrated on the wrong place, you then had to prevent them from being moved to the right place when they discovered their mistake. For that purpose you wanted weeks of interdiction: bombing, destroying roads, bridges, railway junctions, tunnels and everything. For that purpose the whole of the main British and American bomber commanders had to be turned on to the job way ahead of the actual D-Day.

Hugh Astor ***MI5 officer***

I was working for MI5, which was responsible for security in this country, and the section I was working for was B1A which was responsible for capturing German agents and then, whenever possible, running them as double agents.

By 1943 it was realised that all German agents operating in this country were under our control and this opened the possibility of using deception. The agent fits into it by virtue of the fact that he's providing a channel of communication. He's been recruited by the Germans, he's been sent over here by the Germans, the Germans believe

that he's operating freely, and you've therefore got a direct line of communication with his German controllers.

The deception plan for Overlord was brilliantly thought out. The mastermind, really, was David Strangeways. The cover plan created an imaginary army and we gave the Germans the impression that we had available almost twice the number of troops that were in fact in existence. It was quite interesting at the end of the war when we went through all their files and found they had recorded with details all these imaginary units, the names of their commanding officers, their divisional signs, call signs and all the rest of it; where they'd been stationed at different times, what training they'd had, what equipment they'd had. All of this was imaginary and passed on by us. The effect of that was that we were able, up to a point, to persuade them that the Normandy landings, when they started, were a diversionary attack and that the main force was still in East Anglia waiting to go across the Channel to Calais.

Only two agents were really used for the deception plan for Overlord. One was Garbo; the other was Brutus. The others played very small parts; they were sort of beating the triangle in an orchestra, just to fill in details from time to time. In the case of Brutus, what I had done was to report in very great detail the position of all the British troops, how they were equipped, how they were commanded, what training they'd had, and the emphasis was always to put them in the East Anglia area.

We were fortunate that senior people, starting with the Prime Minister and Montgomery, believed wholeheartedly in deception and they were therefore prepared to pay a price to make the deception credible. They accepted that you had to give quite a lot of real information in order to make the deception material look credible. When you come to think of it, you can give away an awful lot of accurate information without revealing your plans and without