

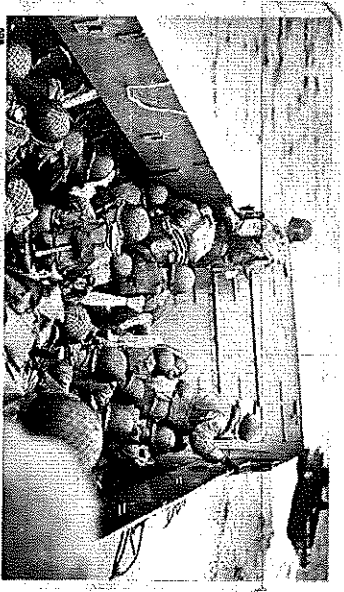
5 June Portsmouth, England

I'm getting restless now. There are hundreds of ships in the harbour - and they are ready for the invasion. All we know is that at some point in the coming days we will set sail for France to try and take back the land that the Germans have seized. My company is ready for attack. We don't know what to expect, but one thing's for sure - France will be liberated.

Midnight, 6 June USS Bayfield, Portsmouth

It's D-Day! The sea is calm. The moon is full. It will be high tide when we land. Perfect conditions, so the General says. We were given our final orders several minutes ago. We will attack the beaches of Normandy. Our company, part of US First Division, are heading to a beach called Omaha. It's a sandy beach, ideal for landing crafts. Once we are close, we will jump into the landing crafts. The plan is that as these land, the doors open, and my men pour out, charging across the beach to take out any German positions in our way.

I'll be responsible for almost two hundred men - Privates, mainly. Young recruits, raw and hungry. They have no idea what awaits them. My worst fear is that they'll be lambs to the slaughter. I guess we'll find out soon enough.



8 June Normandy, France

It's over. We have secured the beach, and the British have done the same throughout Normandy. But at what cost?

I watched my men run across that beach, straight into columns of German machine gun fire. I watched others be blown apart by mortars. By the time I left the landing craft, I was stepping over the dead and dying. I tried my best to comfort them in their last moments, but I had to get up that beach. Three men with me took out a German sentry post with a grenade. I saw the fear in the poor man's eyes moments before he perished. Shortly after, others joined us and we pushed the enemy back. Many surrendered.

I'm asking myself today, what's the point? All this death and destruction... surely there is another way.

Questions – World War Two Diaries: D Day

1) What was the purpose of the D-Day landings? (2)

2) *"The sea is calm. The moon is full. It will be high tide when we land."* Why would these be perfect conditions for the D-Day mission? (3)

3) What does it mean to be 'raw and hungry'? (1)

4) Write three words that describe how the writer feels about those he is responsible for. (3)

5) What line tells you that the writer had no personal hatred for the enemy? (1)

6) The writer questions that there must be another way of winning the war without such huge losses. Do you have any suggestions for him of what they could be? (3)

7) Almost ten thousand American servicemen died on Omaha beach on D-Day. In your opinion, was it a success or a failure? (3)