

United States at war

D-DAY – THE DAY OF CHANGE



When Hitler attacked Poland, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany – the Second World War started. The US joined in after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The war's turning point is often considered D-Day, when British, American and Canadian forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, France in June 1944.

The Battle of Normandy, which opened the western front, **lasted**¹ from June 1944 to August 1944 and resulted in the Allied **liberation**² of Western Europe from Nazi Germany.

Out from the sea

Code-named Operation Overlord, the battle began on June 6, 1944, which is also known as D-Day. About 156,000 American, British and Canadian forces landed on five beaches along a 50-mile stretch of France's Normandy region. According to some estimates, more than 4,000 Allied troops lost their lives in the D-Day invasion; thousands more

were wounded or missing. Less than a week later, on June 11, the beaches were fully protected and over 326,000 troops, more than 50,000 vehicles and about 100,000 tons of equipment, had landed at Normandy.

Plans that worked

The invasion was one of the largest water military **assaults**³ in history and required much planning. Before D-Day, the Allies organized a large **deception**⁴ campaign designed to **mislead**⁵ the Germans about the intended invasion target. By the end of August 1944, all of northern France had been liberated, and by the following spring the Allies had defeated the Germans. The Normandy landings have been called the beginning of the end of the war in Europe.

Dividing the world

The Yalta Conference (in southern Soviet Union) was a meeting of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin,

and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt in February 1945 as World War II was winding down (= getting closer to the end). The leaders agreed to **require**⁶ Germany's **unconditional surrender**⁷ and to set up post-war Germany into four occupation zones, to be controlled by the Soviet Union, Britain, the US and France.

The end of bloody war

Hitler committed suicide in April 1945 and Germany capitulated. At the Potsdam Conference (in Germany) in July-August 1945, then-US President Harry Truman, Churchill and Stalin discussed the ongoing (= continuing) war with Japan as well as the peace settlement with Germany. Churchill and Truman left Eastern Europe's future up to Stalin, as they needed Soviet cooperation in the war against Japan. Shortly after bombing Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the Japanese government

issued (= published) a statement declaring they would accept the **terms**⁸ of the Potsdam Declaration, and on September 2, US General Douglas MacArthur accepted Japan's formal surrender.

World War II proved to be the most devastating international conflict in history, taking the lives of some 35 to 60 million people, including 6 million Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis. Millions more were injured, and still more lost their homes and property.

Jacy Meyer (USA)

VOCABULARY

- ¹ **to last** [lɑːst] – trvat
- ² **liberation** [lɪbə'reɪʃ(ə)n] – osvobození
- ³ **assault** [ə'sɔːlt] – útok
- ⁴ **deception** [dɪ'sepʃ(ə)n] – klam
- ⁵ **to mislead** [mɪs'liːd] – zmást
- ⁶ **to require** [rɪ'kwaɪə] – požadovat
- ⁷ **unconditional surrender** [ʃə'rendə] – bezpodmínečná kapitulace
- ⁸ **term** [tɜːm] – podmínka, požadavek