

Along the Waltham Chase Road

Along the Chase road, a continuous stream of vehicles went along for a few days and nights. It was quite frightening because there were tanks and big lorries and all sorts and you had to ride your bike on the pavement.

One girl who worked at the factory at Shirrell Heath, her husband was one of the soldiers who was camped locally, waiting to embark. She came to work very excited and said, 'I've seen my husband. He's camped at Swanmore, he got in touch with me.' They were everywhere during the last two or three days. We had a field opposite us and they were even camped under the hedge in the field ...

It was Sunday afternoon and my cousin's boy was going to be three. We had saved up for ages, sweets and all our rations for a little tea party for him. It was a nice day so we could have it outside.

Anyway, two soldiers came round to the back door and said, 'Could you give us some water to boil up, to make some tea?' Well with that Mum, my cousin and myself, it ended up we gave them all the kids' party food and used up all our tea and everything to give to these soldiers. They only stopped for about twenty minutes.

It was only about a couple of days beforehand, I suppose. We all knew something was going on because of all this massing of troops going down to the coast. There were rumours you see, and then my brother had seen Mr. Churchill and Eisenhower in this great big car driving through Wickham. You didn't have to be very clever to put two and two together.

Peggy Sorley

At Droxford Station



My father was the Manager of J.E. Smith, coal merchants at the railway station.

One day, Dad came home and said, 'Oh, there's a lot of very important people at the station'. So he 'forgot' to bring something home, and we went for a walk back on the Sunday.

We couldn't get into the station, there was the guard into the station yard, but from the office, you saw right across the yard to the

station, a panoramic view.

We looked across at the special train there. Normally there was only two coaches but I think there was probably three or four. They were brown or something like that. I think there was an engine there with them, because there would have to have been. They were being shunted up and down all the time. It was in the sidings in the night, but in the daytime they were in the actual station most of the time.

While we were there, looking out, Churchill looked out of the window...

Anyway, the guard moved us on, we had to move on then. 'You'd better go'.

Anne H

At the Plantation - Curdridge.

This particular day there was a lot of things going on. And this dispatch rider, with a lot of guards there, said, 'You can't go through there.' I said, 'We got to, cos we live there.' Course they knew we lived ... so they said, 'Run.' So we ran about two steps and then we walked from there.

Two soldiers came up and said to my father, could they have some strawberries and cream, (because we also had a dairy as well as market gardening) because they had special people having tea there.

Dad said to me, 'Go out into the field and pick some strawberries and make them special, Jean.' So anyway, I pick all the big ones, the beautiful ones. They were Sovereigns, so they were good. I picked two baskets of lovely strawberries and then went up into the dairy and took off some cream for them.

And when they went, the soldiers, they said to Dad: 'Tell you who we've got, we've got Montgomery and Churchill, this is what this is for.' Course I didn't know who they were, did I?

Jean Emery



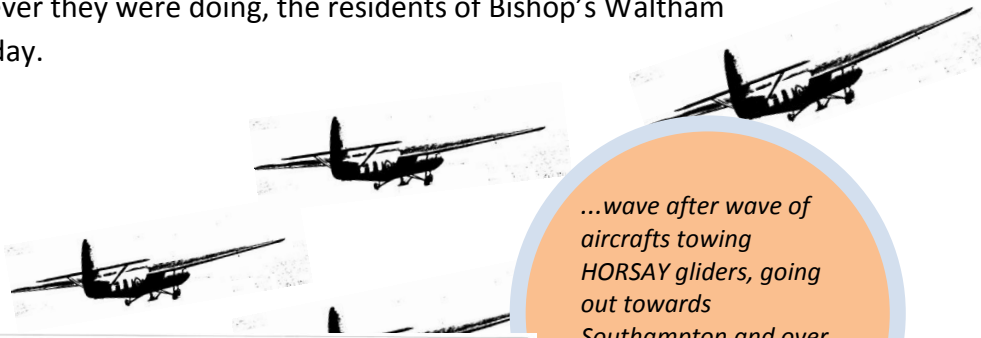
The Plantation - Curdridge
(Courtesy of Trish Simpson-Davis)

6th June 1944: D-Day Arrives

Finally the day came, "the off" was happening. Tanks and Army vehicles blocked the roads, planes and gliders filled the skies. All the secrecy and tension behind what was happening would soon be known to everyone. Wherever they were, whatever they were doing, the residents of Bishop's Waltham and beyond knew that today was the day.

The air was very tense, everyone knew all these forces were waiting in hiding, just waiting for the off. Everybody was on edge.

Melva Langford



...wave after wave of aircrafts towing HORSAY gliders, going out towards Southampton and over the South Coast.

Cameron Floate



We were at school the teacher said to us 'Now tomorrow, when you see a tank, dive into a field or a ditch or whatever'.

Jean Emery

Coming down into Botley, there's a wall on the right hand side. There are 2 numbers, 160 and 161, they're still painted there. That's where the tanks were parked.

Jean Emery

Just before D Day we couldn't get back over the road for at least half an hour because there was a whole load of tanks and lorries going by, all going down to the coast.

Melva Langford.



"Just like that they'd gone. Just like that, down to Southampton to get on the boat ..."

Pete Turner.

Doodlebugs and Bombers

After D-Day the Bishop's Waltham Fire Brigade were called upon to attend several incidents involving flying bombs known as doodlebugs. Every incident was recorded in the Bishop's Waltham National Fire Service Occurrence Book. The most significant plane crash was when "Paper Dollie", a US B-17 Flying Fortress crashed at Dundridge on return from a mission to France after running out of fuel. Two airmen were killed.

From the Occurrence Book:

Tuesday 11th July 1944

05.10 Left to locate flying bomb.

Friday 14th July 1944

02.10 Left to locate flying bomb.

Saturday 15th July 1944

04.05 Left to locate flying bomb.

Crosslanes Farm Ashton.

From the Occurrence Book

Sunday 23rd July 1944

20.45 Plane crash between Dundridge and Bishop's Waltham.

21.13 All crew accounted for.

21.25 From A.F.F.C Wood – At Watson's Farm Dundridge Lane, Corhampton. A 4 engined bomber crashed on open ground and on fire. Tender and ambulance in attendance.

"Paper Dollie" Us B -17 Flying Fortress

On Sunday 23rd July 1944 an allied aircraft crashed at Dundridge. The plane was returning from a mission to France to bomb the Airdrome at Creil. "Paper Dollie" of the 303rd Bomb Group, 358th Squadron ran out of fuel and its engines failed on the return journey and the crew bailed out.

Two men died, Flying Officer Cecil M. Miller when his parachute failed to open fully, and William A. Zweck turret gunner, when his parachute became entangled in the aircraft elevators.

The plane then crashed and caught fire, and the local Home Guard and Fire Brigade were called to the scene.

Both men were taken home for burial.

He (dad) was an auxiliary Fireman until the plane crash. It was one night and they were dragging hoses up over two fields. Georgia Floate.

I found a human ear, it wasn't far from the hedge. I said to the man who was there stopping us from going into the other field, 'What shall I do with this?' and he said he'd take it. But that wasn't a German plane. I think it was one of ours. Georgia Floate.

A plane came down and the pilot was dead, there was one that jettisoned out and his parachute never opened. Sybil Churcher.

Bishop's Waltham Fire Brigade

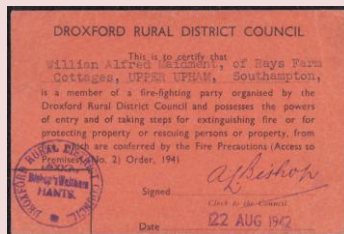
The outbreak of war led to changes in the Fire Service.



Wintershill Hall was taken over as the Headquarters of Area 14. As the bombing increased, local Fire Brigades soon needed to increase their manpower.

Part-time firemen were employed to assist with twenty-four hour fire watch duties.

More equipment was brought in to service, and there were many fire drills and test call-outs to ensure fires were dealt with promptly. Bombs, doodlebugs, Army dump fires and plane crashes became everyday callouts.



Some local residents also assisted, being issued with cards giving them permission to enter premises in order to put out fires.

The Life of a Local Volunteer Fireman

During World War II the increased activity required of the Fire Brigade led to the recruitment of local volunteers. They came from varying places, local shop keepers and workers to those who could assist with night duty after a day's work out of the village.

The Fire Station at the back of the White Swan in Basingwell Street was updated and equipped with bunk beds for the men on duty. Neighbours and friends, they were prepared to help protect the people of Bishop's Waltham. As well as responding to call outs, like today they had to be prepared to train and take part in test calls as Firemen do today.

Those who were local shopkeepers and workers would have to abandon their business when the call came for it was vital that fires were put out quickly. If they were at night they would attract more enemy attention, so crews had to cover twenty-four hours, day and night.

"My father recalled Firemen diving under tables while on duty as more bombs fell, and 'Digging for Victory' by moonlight at his allotment at Newtown. His full time job was in Eastleigh at the Railway Works."

Betty Hiscock

Droxford Rural District Council		
In the event of the services of a Fire Brigade being necessary in any part of the Rural District Fire Brigades should be called as set out below:		
Parish	Brigade	Telephone No. (Day and Night)
Bishop's Waltham	-	
Curbridge	-	
Durley	-	
Shedfield	-	
Swanmore	-	
Upham	-	
Curbridge (except that part of the parish south of a line drawn from the boundary of the parish on the west through Ridge Farm to the Southern Railway in the east)	BISHOP'S WALTHAM	Bishop's Waltham 180
Corhampton and Meonstoke	-	
Droxford	-	
Exton	-	
Hambleton	-	
Soberton (excluding Hundred Acres and West Lodge)	DROXFORD	Droxford 8
Warnford	-	
Westmeon	-	
Boarhunt	-	
Curbridge , south of a line drawn from the boundary of the parish on west through Ridge Farm to Southern Railway in the east, together with that part of the parish east of the railway line	WICKHAM	Wickham 3100
Hundred Acres and West Lodge	-	
Southwick (village)	-	
Wickham	-	
Denmead and remaining part of the parish of Southwick and Widley	WATERLOO-VILLE	Waterlooville 2222

The Square, Bishop's Waltham Southampton.
23rd July, 1940.

A. L. BISHOP,
Clerk of the Council

Life goes on

When the war was declared no one knew exactly what to expect but by 1944, the people of Bishop's Waltham got used to identity cards, gas masks, food rationing and even air raids. The High Street looked much the same as today but very noticeable was the absence of young men and cars as petrol was rationed. However during Spring of 1944, things suddenly changed, there were American and Canadian servicemen and army vehicles everywhere. Camps sprung up overnight.

Through the Oral History project, the Parish Magazines and the newspapers we learn about everyday life in Bishop's Waltham.

What the papers say (extracts).

Winchester Observer 19 February 1944.

A lady from Durley was summoned for stealing 18 clothing coupons from a property in Bishop's Waltham and selling them to Mr Thorne of Little Ashton Farm. She explained that because of the wet weather she has not been able to work on the land and had no bread in the house and no boots for the children. She was sentenced to one month's imprisonment for stealing and transferring the coupons. Mr Thorne, pleaded guilty and was fined £5.

Winchester Observer 24 June 1944

Mrs Stubbs died, she was well known and her funeral at St Peter's Church was attended by family, friends and local dignities.

Hampshire Observer 4 March 1944

LAC Gerald Churcher has been granted a commission in the RAF with the rank of pilot Officer. He is the young son of Mr and Mrs L H Churcher of the Square.

Hampshire Observer 20 May 1944

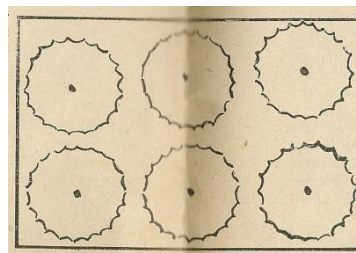
£300 was raised during the Bishop's Waltham Salute the Soldier week through activities such as, Bridge Drive, baseball match, street collections, jumble sales, dances...

Winchester Observer 20 May 1944

The Women institute at their monthly meeting learn about Home Dyeing, the competition for the best bowl of flowers from members' own gardens was won by Mrs Harvey and Miss Blunden.

Parish Magazines

The Parish Magazines gives food and domestic tips, recipes, free patterns and competitions for children.



Shoe scraper made with ginger bottle tops nailed to a thick piece of wood



Life goes on

Yes it was very lively I can tell you in the High Street, swarming with Canadians, shouting and yelling, you know, fighting. **Peggy Sorley**

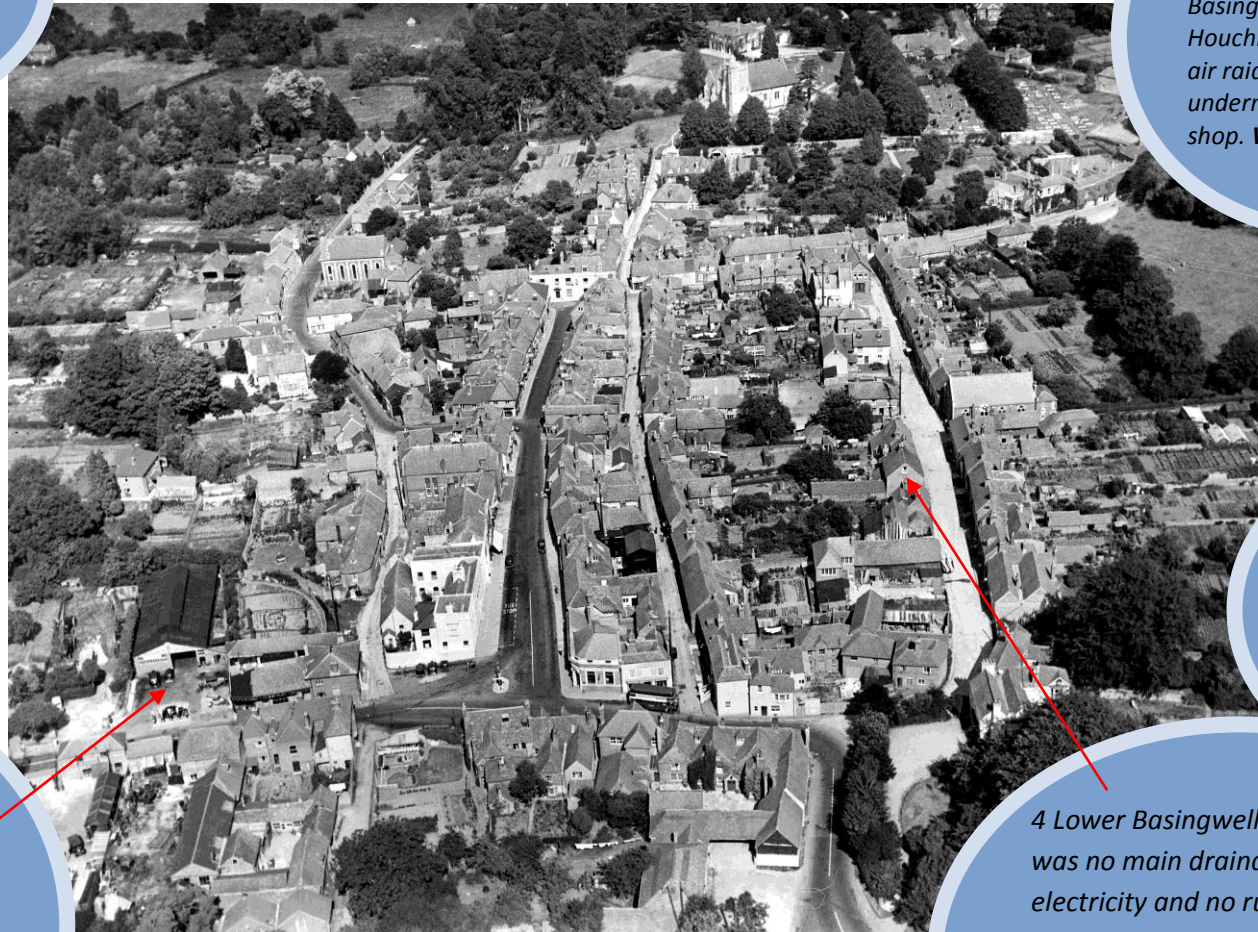
In the middle of the night, we had to walk from Basingwell Street, across Houchin street to the only air raid shelter, a cellar underneath Annabel's shop. **Winnie Carpenter**

In the High Street, at the Cycle Shop, which is now the Co-Op. My father was the manager and I worked with him. **Cameron Floate**

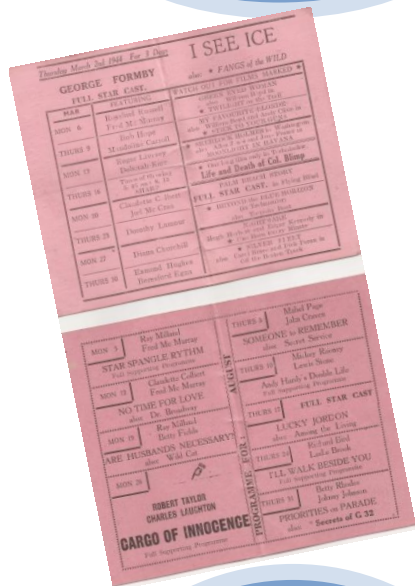
Well there'd be a queue outside of practically every shop,... The butcher that we used to go to was the little shop where the Wool Shop is now. **Jean Marriner**

4 Lower Basingwell Street: There was no main drainage, no electricity and no running hot water. Lighting in the house was by gas and routinely I would be sent to the local hardware shop to buy replacement mantles which were very flimsy. **Vic Kimber**

Rooke's garage was where Fox's is now ... It was just along the road from Glider Coaches ...where Budgens is now...And the bungalow that they lived in, my grandfather built himself and that was near enough where the petrol pumps are now ... the Esso Garage... **John Gent**



Aerial photo of Bishop's Waltham c.1940



Nazi Germany



Field Marshall Rudolf Gerd Von Runstedt.

Born December 1875. Served during World War I then in World War II commanded Army Group A during invasion of France. Promoted Field Marshall in 1940. Commanded Army Group South during invasion of Russia where his armies created the greatest encirclement in history at the Battle of Kiev. In 1942 he was appointed Commander in Chief West and served in this post throughout the Battle of Normandy. Dismissed by Hitler in March 1945. He died in Hanover in January 1953.



Adolf Hitler.

Born in Austria April 1889. Served in the German Army in World War I and was awarded two Iron Crosses for bravery. He entered politics in 1919 and eventually became German Chancellor in January 1933. He strengthened the German Army and embarked on aggressive expansion of territory culminating in the invasion of Poland September 1939 which was the start of World War II. With the Russians closing in on his bunker in Berlin he committed suicide with his wife, Eva Braun, April 30 1945.



Field Marshall Erwin Johannes Rommel

Born November 1881. He was a highly decorated in World War I. He commanded the 7th Panzer Division during the invasion of France. He was then appointed to command the German 'Afrika Corps' during the North African campaign where he proved himself highly skilled in desert battles inflicting many defeats on British forces before finally being defeated by General Montgomery at the Battle of El Alamein. He commanded Army Group B opposing the Allied invasion of Normandy. Here he considerably improved the beach defences before the invasion. He was badly wounded by an Allied air strike and having recovered was linked to a plot to kill Hitler.

He was given a choice ,face a court martial or take his own life. He committed suicide 14 October 1944.

Rabbits, Woolly Socks and a Bug House!!

Food Rationing

Spam fritters, I can still smell the fat they cooked it in, I didn't like it very much. If they had a bit of dried egg left, they mixed it with flour and water and coated it in and fried it, but I can't remember it being very nice at all!

Jean Marriner

Of course being on the farm was a big bonus. All the rabbits you could catch.

John Brooke

I think what hurt me then, because we were all short of food, were all hungry, was the amount of food the Americans had thrown away.

Cameron Floate

While many towns and cities suffered hardships caused by the rationing of food, Bishop's Waltham, like many other country towns fared better. Many families supplemented their meagre rations with home grown meat, snared rabbits and vegetables. Extra allotments, like the

one in the old Rectory garden joined the 'Digging for Victory' scheme. People queued at the Institute in Bank Street to renew their ration books. Surrounded by farms, people from Southampton and Portsmouth bussed out to the country to buy extra food. Some children were lucky to be given 'candies' by the troops who gathered in the area ready for D-Day.

Occupations

For many the war brought new opportunities to become involved in the war effort, either in the Services or factories manufacturing vital items. Here in the countryside, small businesses, and even larger ones, sprang up in the surrounding villages. Women worked in paid and voluntary roles as well as taking in evacuees and caring for their own families.

They had frames where they put nets over and you used to have material to make camouflage nets. I used to go down after school. It was easy to do, you only had to thread the material through the nets.

Betty Millier

In her spare time she [mother] used to make fins for the gliders.

John Hunter

At Ash House Farm in Sandy Lane, [Waltham Chase], they used to make all different bits for engines, Spitfires.

Jean Emery

Entertainment

Although the Second World War was a time of disruption and uncertainty, both local people and the troops who were camped in or around Bishop's Waltham still found time to enjoy life. The radio in the home was a source of news about the war. The Palace Cinema, locally known as the 'Bug House' was in the High Street (Oddfellows Hall). Dances blossomed in the Drill Hall, Church Hall and the Elms Hut. The black American Jazz Bands, who were based at Hazelholt were very popular. They even played baseball, watched by locals. One game was held at Pondsides.



And of course there was no television to watch or anything, all you could do was draw or something on a piece of paper or whatever and then listen to the wireless.

Pat Lamb

During early 1944 there was a Black American Jazz Band who offered to play at the YFC Dance which was being held at the Upham Village Hall.

Peggy Huggett (Annels)

The Allied



Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill.

Born in 1874 Winston Churchill served in the army in Afghanistan (1896), the Sudan Campaign (1898) and the Boer War 1890-1892 before turning to politics. In World War I he became First Lord of the Admiralty and in World War II became Prime Minister in 1940 serving until 1945 when he was defeated in the General Election. He served again as Prime Minister in 1951 and was knighted in 1953. He died in 1965.

General Sir Miles Dempsey.

He was awarded the Military Cross in World War I and the DSO during the evacuation from Dunkirk in World War II. He

then fought as a Corps Commander in the North African campaign. He was selected by General Montgomery to command the British 2nd Army for the invasion of Normandy and the fighting thereafter. He held this command until the German surrender 3 May 1945. He died aged 72 on 5 June 1969.



Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery

He first saw active service in World War I. In World War II he was a Divisional Commander in the British Expeditionary Force until the evacuation from Dunkirk May/June 1940.. In August 1942 he took command of the 8th Army in North Africa. He defeated Rommel at the battle of El Alamein in October 1942 and then continued to command the 8th Army in the advance to Tunis, and the campaigns in Sicily and Italy. He returned to England in late 1943 to take over the army planning for D-Day and thence command of the 21st Army Group for the Normandy invasion. When the allies crossed the Seine 30 July 1944 US Forces were removed from his command and he was left with the British and Canadian Armies. In May 1945 he took the surrender of German forces at Luneberg Heath. After the war he became Chief of the Imperial General Staff. He died in 1967.

Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay.

Admiral Ramsay in command of OPERATION DYNAMO, the evacuation from Dunkirk when 338,200 troops were withdrawn to the United Kingdom. He then planned the Naval aspects of the invasion of North Africa (OP TORCH) and the invasion of Sicily (OP HUSKY) before returning to UK to plan the naval part of the invasion of Normandy (OP NEPTUNE). The maritime forces for the invasion comprised nearly 7,000 vessels of all types who delivered over 125,000 troops across the beaches on 6th June. Tragically he was killed in an air accident in France 2 January 1945.



Air Marshall Trafford Leigh-Mallory.

Born in July 1892 he served in the Royal Flying Corps in World War I. In World War II he was commanding No 12 (Fighter) Group during the Battle of Britain. In 1942 he became Commander in Chief Fighter Command. Then in 1943 he was appointed as Commander in Chief Allied Expeditionary Air Force for the invasion of Normandy. He was killed in an air crash in the French Alps en route to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) 14 November 1944.

The Allied

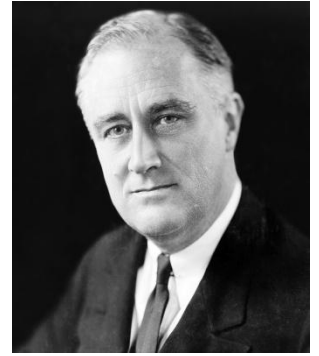


General Dwight David Eisenhower

He commanded Allied forces in the North African landings (OP TORCH) in November 1942 and the subsequent invasion of Sicily in July 1943. He was Supreme Allied Commander for the invasion of Normandy in June 1944 and the campaign that followed until the German surrender in May 1945. In 1950 he was appointed NATO Supreme Commander. He was elected 34th US President in 1952 and re-elected in 1956. He died in 1969.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

He was the 32nd President of the United States and President for most of World War II. Entered the war after Pearl Harbour December 1941. A friend and supporter of Britain. He suffered from polio and died three weeks before German surrender in 1945.



General Henry Crerar Canadian Army

He was born April 1888 and fought in World War I in the artillery. In 1940 he became Chief of the Canadian General Staff and then in 1941 General Officer Commanding 2nd Canadian Infantry Division in England. In 1942 he was appointed in command of the 1st Canadian Corps firstly in England and then in Italy. In 1944 after the D-Day landings when the 1st Canadian Army was formed he was made its Commander in Chief. He remained with the Canadian Army until the German surrender in May 1945. He died in April 1965.

General Omah Nelson Bradley

General Bradley served in World War I. In World War II during the campaign in Morocco and Tunisia 1942-1943 he commanded a US Army Corps. He remained a Corps commander for the invasion of Sicily July 1943. For the invasion of Normandy he assumed command of the US 1st Army which was part of General Montgomery's 21st Army Group. Later he took command of the US 12th Army Group and fought through France and Germany. After the war he became the first Permanent chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was promoted 5 Star general in 1950 and died in 1981.



What was D-Day?

On 6th June 1944 the largest amphibious operation ever staged took place when United States, British and Canadian forces invaded Europe over the beaches of Normandy. The operation was code named Overlord.

The road to D-Day



Dunkirk

After the humiliated retreat from Dunkirk in June 1940 and the surrender of France, Britain was by herself and an invasion by Germany was expected.



Invasion of Russia

Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941 turned out to be disastrous and after 3 years of Soviet resistance it marked the beginning of the end for the German Army. The Russians were urging the Allies to relieve the pressure on them by opening a second front in north-west Europe.

The Battle of Britain

The Germans began with attacks on merchant shipping before switching to radar sites and RAF airfields and then to bombing British cities (The Blitz). The RAF inflicted such losses on the German Air Force that Hitler decided to abandon plans for invasion and switched his attention to hostilities against Russia.

The Threat to the Allies



The Atlantic wall

The Atlantic Wall was the name of the German coastal defensive structure stretching from Norway, along the Belgium and French coastline to the Spanish border. The wall was built to repulse an Allied attack on Nazi-occupied Europe. The building of the Wall started in 1942 but when ROMMEL was appointed in 1943 he was appalled by the lack of progress and concentrated his effort on securing the Normandy beaches, but he was unable to complete his plans before the Allies landed. Nevertheless his fortifications caused considerable difficulties for the invading forces and many lives and much equipment was lost due to the beach defences.

German Forces

The number of German troops in Normandy at the time of the invasion was around 400,000.

7th Army

General DOLLMAN Defending the area Orne Estuary through Brittany to the estuary of the River Loire. This covered the invasion beaches. He is pictured here with ROMMEL. Most of his forces were conscripts from the occupied territories but buttressed by a few regular army formations. Their transport was mainly horse drawn.



Commander in Chief West was Field Marshall VON RUNSTEDT. Under him was Army Group B covering Normandy and Brittany commanded by Field Marshall ROMMEL

What was D-Day?

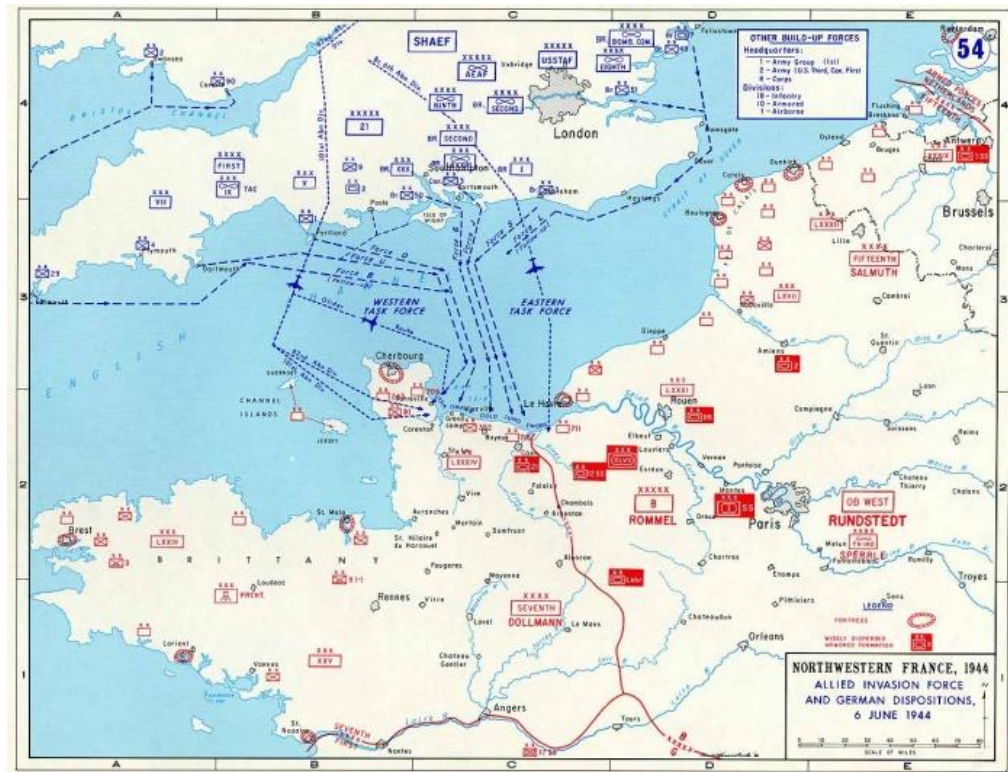
What was D-Day?

D-Day Planning.

Following the debacle of the August 1942 Dieppe Raid from which many lessons were learnt, planning started for the invasion of France. In January 1943 at a conference in Casablanca the Allies agreed to invade Sicily and Italy before invading France. The date was decided as May 1944 before changing to June 1944. The Normandy beaches were chosen for the assault. Due to a very comprehensive Allied deception plan and their own intelligence the Germans remained convinced the invasion would be at the Pas de Calais so most of their defences were in this region.



Operation Overlord - June 6th 1944



The map shows the routes the invading forces took from their embarkation points in England to the five beach areas earmarked for the invasion. The map also shows the disposition of German forces who would oppose the allied forces.

The plan was for the allies to assault over five beaches from 0630 on the day. The beaches were given code names of UTAH, OMAHA, GOLD, JUNO and SWORD. The assault Divisions were preceded by parachute landings to secure the flanks of the invasion area. In the West two US Airborne Divisions landed just after midnight close to

the UTAH and OMAHA. To the East the British 6th Airborne Division landed at the same time and secured the flank of SWORD Beach.

The route to Victory

After the invasion the fighting in Normandy went on until early August 1944 when the Allies crossed the River Seine and Paris was liberated 25 August. The Allied then advanced through Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg before crossing the River Rhein on 7th March 1945. Hitler committed suicide in April 1945 and General Jodl signed the unconditional surrender of all German Forces at Reims on 7th May 1945. The official end of the war was 8th May 1945

D-Day by numbers - 156,000 Allied troops landed, 6,939 naval vessels landed, 11,590 Aircraft supported the landings, 10,000 estimated allied casualties.

What was D-Day?
