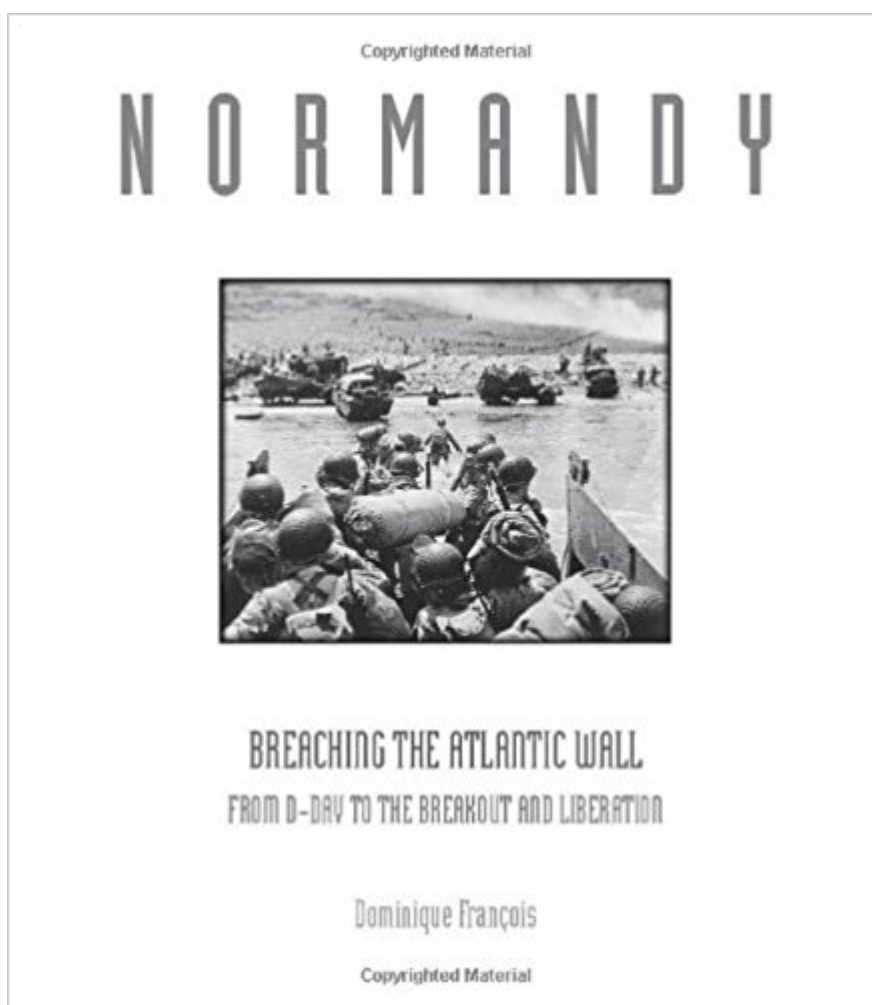


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Normandy: Breaching The Atlantic Wall: From D-Day To The Breakout And Liberation



Synopsis

Told in full, in never-before-seen detail, this is the first complete illustrated history of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of France. The book's on-the-ground and behind-the-scenes accounts of both the attacking Allies and the defending Germans offer a uniquely broad perspective on the Normandy landing and subsequent battles. Dominique Francois, a noted expert on D-Day and Normandy, begins with the German's occupation of the region, the building of the Atlantic Wall by Rommel, and preparations for the defense of the French Coast. Moving back and forth between the Germans and the Allies, he captures the tension of the buildup on both sides, the training in England, and the aerial preparation of the battle field by U. S. Air Forces. The Dieppe Raid, the tragedy at Slapton Sands, the drama of the embarkation, the night drops, the landing--all of these are depicted in remarkable photographs and descriptions that put readers in the middle of action. From the beaches to the breakout and race across France, this expertly told and illustrated volume makes a critical moment in WWII history real for all readers and all time.

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Customer Reviews

The Buildup to H-Hour At 9:30 PM, a tense meeting took place in the library of the maritime prefecture at Southwick House, the headquarters of Adm. Sir Bertram Ramsay. Reporting to Eisenhower and the top commanders assembled about him, the meteorologist was certain of inclement weather: the coming four days would be marked by strong winds, low clouds, and fog. Despite this discouraging information, Eisenhower gave the order for Allied Task Forces U and O,

stationed farthest to the west along the coast at Devonshire and Portland, to launch. On Sunday, June 4, at 4:15 AM, two hours before the preponderance of the fleet was scheduled to weigh anchor, Eisenhower convened the high command. With no improvement in the weather, the supreme commander, despite the disagreement of Montgomery, decided to wait for twenty-four hours. The entirety of Allied Task Force U, commanded by Rear Adm. Alan Goodrich Kirk, and part of Task Force O, who were already on their way, received the order to turn around and head back. At 9:00 PM of the same day, Eisenhower convened another meeting at Southwick House, attended by Montgomery, Air Chief Marshal Arthur William Tedder (Eisenhower's deputy in the Mediterranean and Northwest Europe), Leigh-Mallory, Ramsay, Gen. Walter Bedell Smith (Eisenhower's chief of staff during his tenure at SHAEF), and others. If the order to go was not given before June 5 at dawn, the entire mission would have to be postponed for fifteen days, entailing serious consequences. The chief meteorologist reported, however, that there would soon be a break in the storm, predicting decreasing winds and clearing skies for June 5 and the night of June 5-6. Eisenhower asked for the opinions of those in the room. Leigh-Mallory and Tedder remarked that clear skies were an absolute necessity for the success of preliminary bombings. Bedell Smith said that to postpone the operation again carried the real risk of calling the entire operation into question, while Ramsay insisted on the urgency of making a decision in order to give the navy sufficient time. Eisenhower then questioned Montgomery, who again categorically opposed any postponement. The immense responsibility of the final decision weighed squarely on Eisenhower's shoulders. After weighing the pros and cons, he gave the order after a long silence: "OK. Let's go!" NARA NARA NARA NARA NARA NARA Even before the first bombers took off from England to attack the Normandy coast, the German high command knew the invasion had begun. Through their usual means of spying and treason, the German military espionage agency, the Abwehr, had succeeded in surreptitiously infiltrating the Allied network: Overlord was no longer a secret. No one—not an officer of the German general staff, not a commander in the field, not a single soldier—was surprised on June 6 by the invasion. Nevertheless, the invasion came to pass. The Allied high command had succeeded in establishing a vast organization of spies and saboteurs in France. Capable leaders were in charge of operations for the principal sections, including the impeccably functioning Alliance des Animaux (Animal Alliance), so called because its members knew each other only by call names taken from the animal kingdom. Extending throughout all of France, it consisted of thousands of members, led by district chiefs or commandos. The alliance sent information to the Allies by radio or carrier pigeon, and spied and organized acts

of sabotage on a grand scale. The organization had two missions: to sabotage and destroy the preparation of German defenses and, even more importantly, to prepare for mass action at the decisive moment of invasion. It was largely unknown, for example, that a mere ten grams of sugar, tossed opportunely into a cement mixer, sufficed to render a hundred kilos of cement devoid of strength. A single Resistance member in the Obligatory Work Service, posted handily close to the cement mixer, could thus easily wreak havoc on elements of the German fortifications by introducing relatively tiny portions of sugar into either the dry mixture or the water used to make the cement. Images, clockwise from top left: Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division in a landing craft have just received their copies of General Eisenhower's order of the day for June 6. Long lines of infantrymen wait to embark on landing craft, assault (LCAs); landing craft, vehicle, personnel (LCVPs); and landing craft, infantry (LCIs). Vehicles chained to the deck were parked in position to back out of an LCVP. Trucks, jeeps, and other vehicles were brought in as support on the second wave. Stormy weather caused General Eisenhower to rescind his original departure orders, delaying D-Day until June 6. Meanwhile, thousands of troops remained in wait. Troops about to embark from southern England attend a religious service. Here, a Catholic chaplain blesses the men about to participate in the "Great Crusade." Rangers tasked with the mission of assaulting the rocky cliffs of Pointe du Hoc are ready to take to the sea in an LCVP. --This text refers to the Flexibound edition.

This coffee-table book, packed with prints and photographs covering the Allies' June 1944 invasion of France is clearly a labor of love by French military historian François. A preinvasion bombing killed his grandfather, a Norman farmer, and barely missed his father, age 10 at the time. Chapter one offers family photographs as well as posters and photos of the 1940-1944 German occupation. Even better is an epilogue of before-and-after photographs juxtaposing images of locations like Omaha Beach in 1944 and 60 years later. In between, the pages teem with images of the massive Allied buildup in England, the invasion itself and the battles in Normandy interspersed with sidebars on generals and soldiers awarded medals for their bravery. Readers familiar with the iconic Normandy photographs will not find them; among the myriad of images in the archives, François's choices emphasize modest soldierly activity and civilian miseries. The extensive text delivers a conventional, undistinguished history of events, so readers will lose little by skimming. Picture books on the Normandy invasion would fill a substantial shelf, but this one offers some modestly unusual features. 100 color and 400 b&w photos. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Very good

A trip to Normandy several years ago made a HUGE impact on me, so I have decided to take my two grown children this summer, hoping they, too, will gain a greater appreciation for the history and sacrifices made in Normandy. I bought the book as a Christmas gift to give them some background and a better understanding of the events in Normandy before our trip. This book is fabulous. The photographs and detail are amazing. Although I have only looked through the book and read different sections sporadically, I have been really impressed with quality of this book.

I use the book more for historical reference for my hobby, rather than "enjoyable reading." The book contains many photographs which I have not seen before. Clarity of the photographs is outstanding. In my opinion the book is well balanced between the amount the pictures and narration or description of the fighting in Normandy.

A vvery clearly written account of the invasion of Europe. It was easy to read, very enjoyable, and made even better with all the photographs. I recommend this book highly to anyone with an intrest in WWII history.

I thought this was a fascinating look at Normandy. Because I had bought this as a hard cover, there was the ability to add this to my Kindle HDX at the reduced incentive pricing. I am happy I did so.

The book has great maps that are very helpful in explaining how the battle progressed. It also has pictures that are different than other books that show the same pictures that you have seen before.

Francois has brought together photographs not seen elsewhere, and his narrative is first rate. It is a valuable book about WWII. Thank you, Dominique. Signed, Carter Martin

informative with many good photos

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