



The Turning Point of WWII

D-Day is the name given to the day of the Allied invasion of France during WWII. It began on June 6, 1944, and was the greatest land-and-sea operation in history.



Scene from the movie “Saving Private Ryan”

In 1940, France was occupied by The Nazis.

In November 1942, the Nazis took over the rest of France. By then, they controlled much of Europe between the Spanish and Russian borders...

Great Britain stood alone.



Commanded by Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Allied forces decided to invade Normandy, since their only other option, Pas De Calais, was highly secured.

Just after midnight on June 6th, 23,500 American and British paratroopers landed behind German lines. 1,200 transport planes and 700 gliders were used.



A little after daybreak, 4,000 transports, 800 warships, and an unknown number of smaller boats arrived at the beaches of Normandy with the US and British armies.



H-Hour.....June 6th, 1944

The Allies invaded five beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Omaha was the toughest of them all. Two American divisions were sent to Omaha, giving it the highest number of casualties out of all five, about 2,400 casualties at Omaha on June 6.



Omaha consisted of 8 concrete bunkers, 35 pillboxes, 4 artillery batteries, 18 anti-tank guns, 35 rocket launching sites, no less than 85 machine gun nests, and countless Germans with small arms.

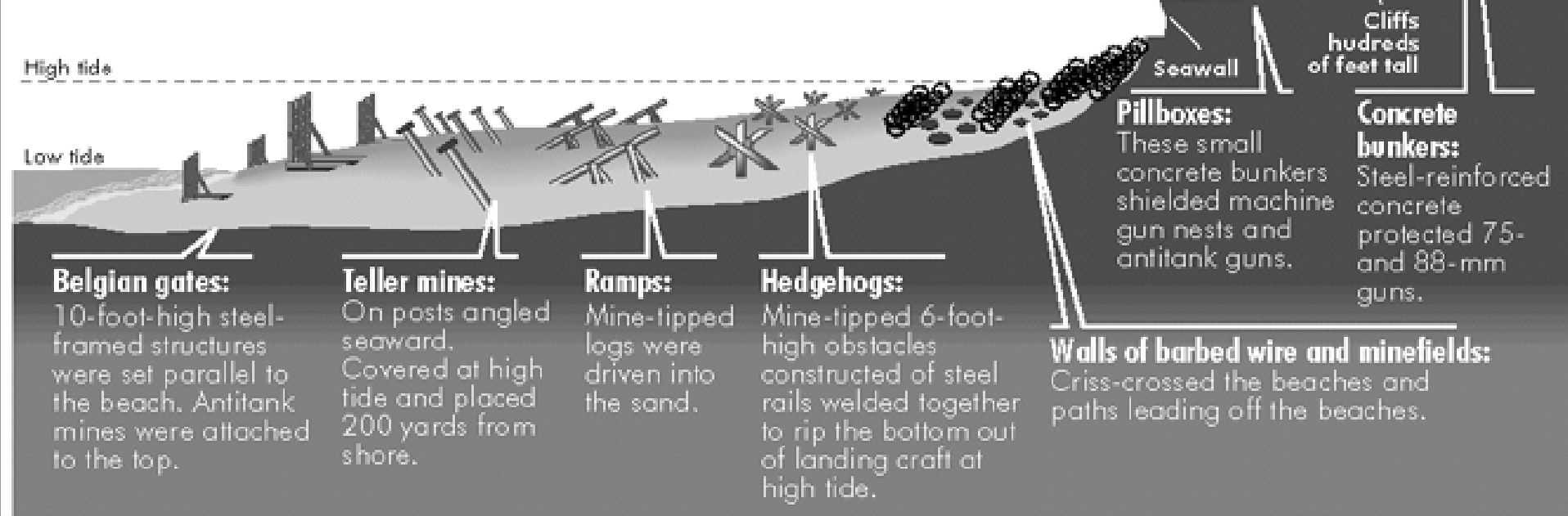
Obstacles found on
Omaha Beach



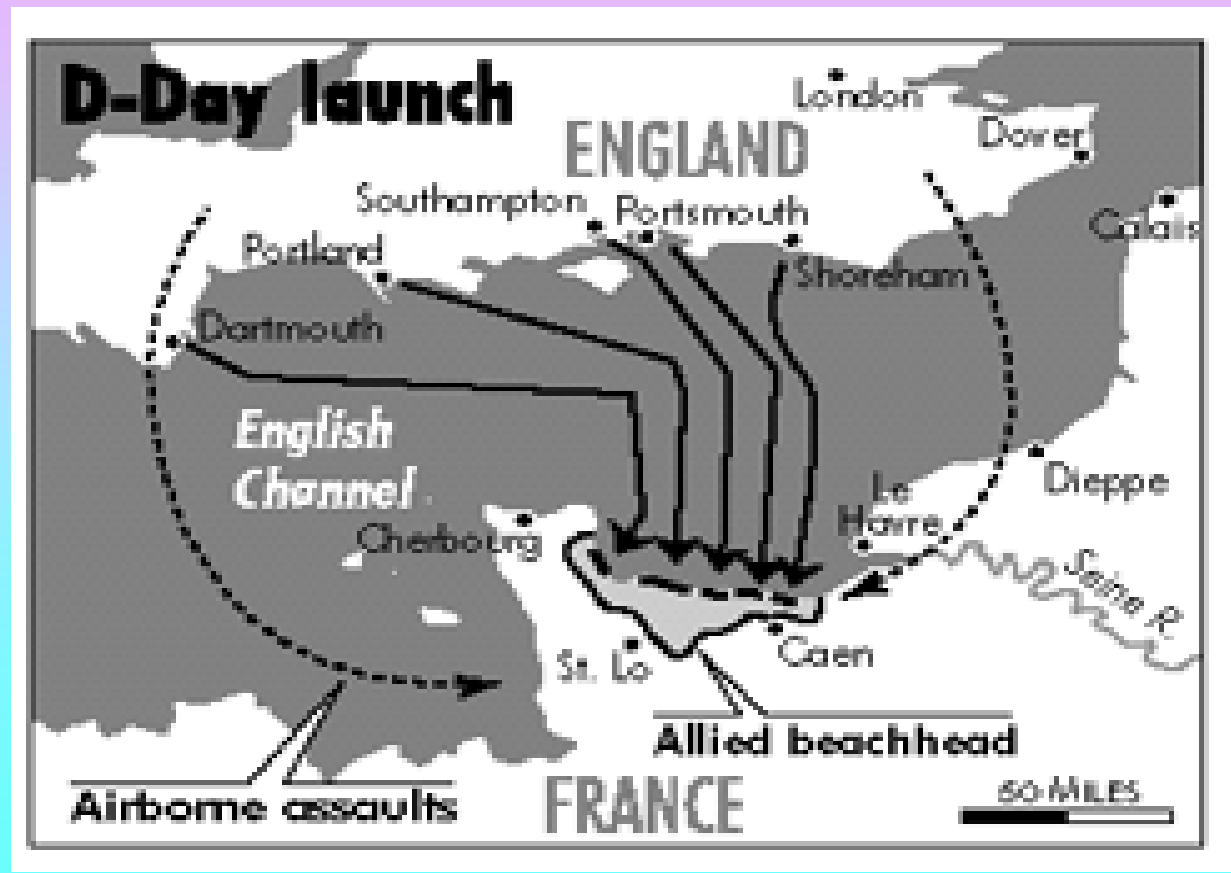
Another obstacle was the Atlantic Wall. It was built along the western coast of Europe to guard against an allied invasion.

Breaking through the "Atlantic Wall"

To guard against an Allied invasion of Europe, Adolf Hitler ordered the laying of millions of mines and miles of barbed wire and poured tons of concrete to create a defensive barrier along the western coast of Europe. The plan was a sham because the Germans didn't know exactly where an invasion would occur. Yet it cost many Allied soldiers their lives to secure the beaches of Normandy.



The Germans thought the attacks would be on Calais. Once they realized Normandy was the true site of invasion, it was too late. The allied forces had already started to establish a firm control of France.

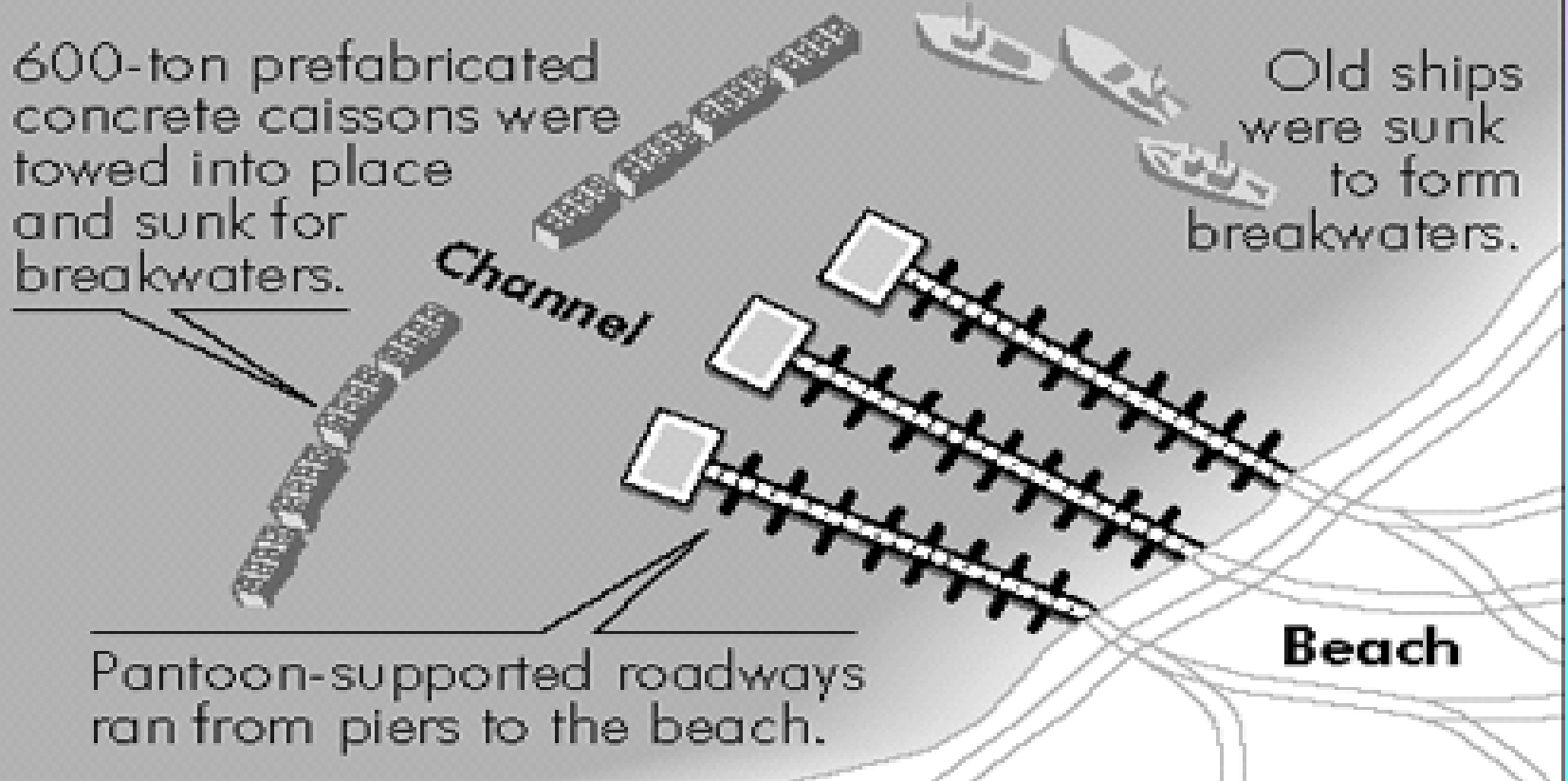


Reinforcing the invasion

Supplies and reinforcements were primarily delivered at two **Mulberries**, or artificial harbors. More than 500,000 troops and 80,000 vehicles landed at the harbors before a storm on June 19 and 22 destroyed the **Omaha Beach** harbor and crippled the one at **Gold Beach**.

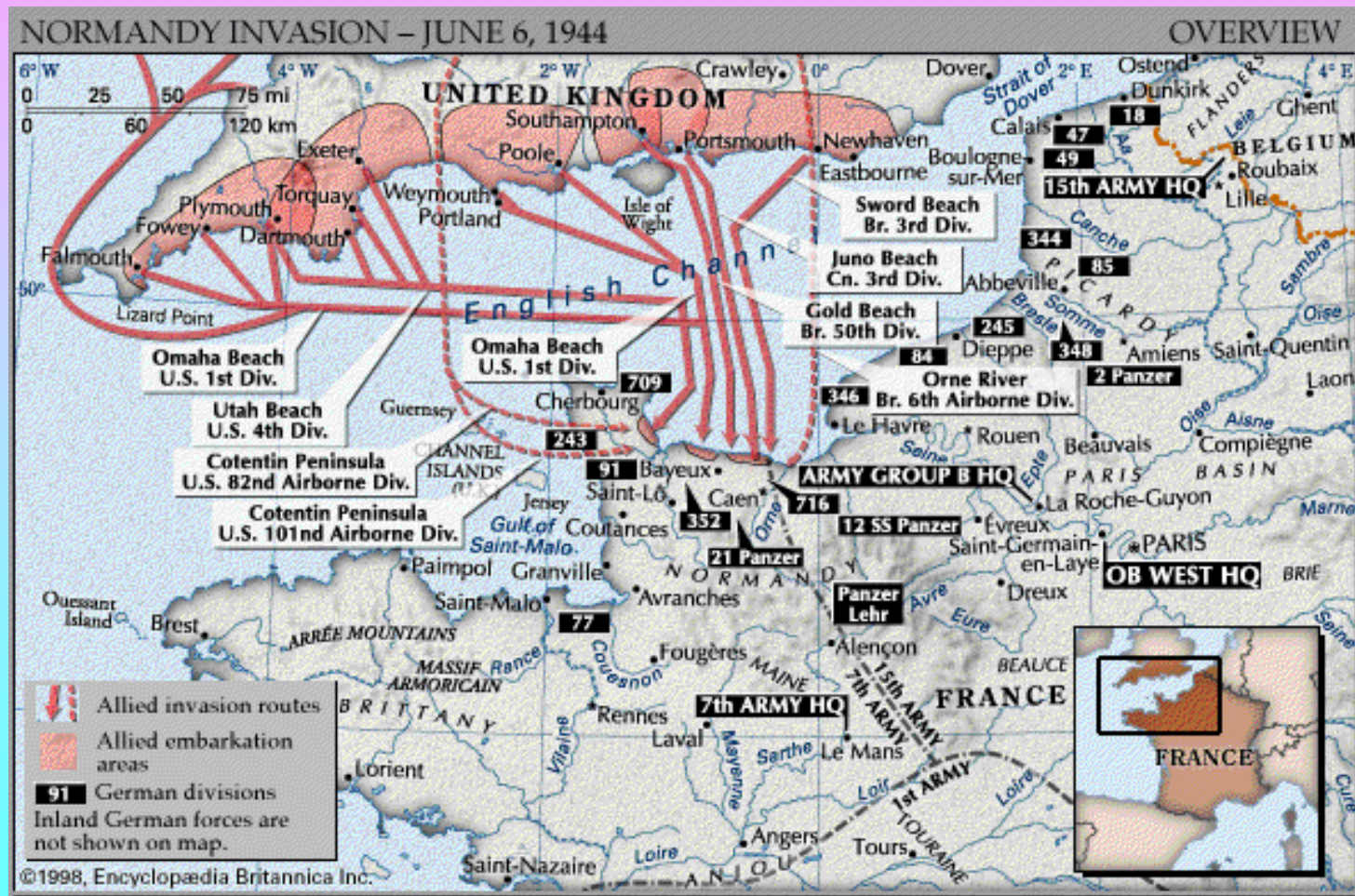
600-ton prefabricated concrete caissons were towed into place and sunk for breakwaters.

Old ships were sunk to form breakwaters.



Pontoon-supported roadways ran from piers to the beach.

The D-Day invasion was successful and turned the course of WWII and world history. By landing in Normandy, the Allies made an opening where they could strike at the heart of Nazi Germany.



Many movies were made and books written about D-Day, such as *The Longest Day* and *Saving Private Ryan*. "D-Day" in military terms, is simply the first day of a major operation. However, in American history and culture, it means the invasion of Normandy, an event that changed world history forever.



Scene from the movie "Saving Private Ryan"

Credits

D-Day-The Atlantic Wall By: Webmaster Alvarez

http://www.geocities.com/overlord_d_day Accessed: 10/26/01

D-Day-The Atlantic Wall graphic:

<http://archive.nandotimes.com/sproject/dday/atlwall.gif> accessed
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D-Day Beaches By: Tenna Perry

http://txtx.essortment.com/ddaybeaches_rjse.htm Accessed:
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D-Day By: Tom

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Operation Overlord By:Patrick McGinnis

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