



RHUMB LINES

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Remembering Operation Overlord: Normandy Landings

“Although military historians generally regard the U.S. Navy as little more than a ferry service in the epic June 1944 Normandy landings, the deaths of more than a thousand of its Sailors in the initial days of the invasion account for one out of every five American combat fatalities during that period. We’re erecting this monument so that the U.S. Navy is honored properly along with all the other American and Allied armed services that fought in the Normandy invasion.”

– Capt. (Ret.) Ken Johnson, Commander General of the Naval Order of the United States

On June 6, 1944, the Allied [invasion of Normandy](#) changed the course of history, becoming the decisive battle of World War II that opened the drive into Germany and ultimately destroyed the Nazi regime. On Sept. 27, a Navy D-Day monument, organized by the Naval Order of the United States, will be dedicated in Normandy to the U.S. Navy Sailors who fought during D-Day.

Naval forces working together in 1944

- The naval component of the operation, code named Operation Neptune, comprised large numbers of warships, auxiliaries and landing craft. In all, Britain, Canada, and the United States, as well as the navies-in-exile of France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Greece, supplied 1,213 warships for the invasion.
- The same navies also provided 4,126 amphibious crafts. More than 3,500 of these landing crafts were actually used during the invasion. These amphibious crafts provided the crucial troop-carrying capacity to land the thousands of men, vehicles, and artillery along the 50-mile wide target area in the Bay of the Seine.
- Twelve Allied nations provided fighting units that participated in the invasion, including Australia, Canada, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Greece, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Naval forces working together now

- While the mission today is different, U.S. naval forces still engage around the world with our friends and allies, working together to support operations from maritime security missions to humanitarian assistance/disaster response.
- U.S. Naval Forces Europe participate in operations and exercises with many of the same nations that contributed to Operation Neptune, and has expanded to work with nations from the Black Sea to the Gulf of Guinea and throughout the 6th Fleet Area of Operations.
- The U.S. Navy’s proficiency in joint planning processes, our work with other countries and the ingenuity of our Sailors enables the power projection needed for cooperative 21st Century Seapower.

Key Messages

- Cooperative relationships were essential to the success of Operation Neptune, and are a key component in today’s maritime strategy.
- Expanded cooperative relationships with other nations contribute to the security and stability of the maritime domain for the benefit of all.
- We continue remembering the contributions and sacrifice of those who served on D-Day by working together with other countries to foster a peaceful global system.

Facts & Figures

- Largest seaborne invasion in history, involving nearly three million troops crossing the English Channel from England to Normandy in occupied France.
- 1,068 U.S. Sailors were killed and eight U.S. Navy warships were sunk.
- The U.S. Navy has not previously been recognized by any monument or memorial at Normandy.
- There are currently more than 60 countries working together in the 6th Fleet AOR.