

# D Day: Battle On The Beach (Ranger In Time)

## 75th Ranger Regiment

*killed in the two-day battle. On August 6, a platoon of U.S. Army Rangers began taking fire while trying to capture a senior Taliban leader in the Tangi*

The 75th Ranger Regiment, also known as the Army Rangers, is the United States Army Special Operations Command's premier light infantry and direct-action raid force. The 75th Ranger Regiment is also part of Joint Special Operations Command via the Regimental Reconnaissance Company (RRC). The regiment is headquartered at Fort Benning, Georgia, and comprises a regimental headquarters company, a military intelligence battalion, a special troops battalion, and three Ranger battalions.

The 75th Ranger Regiment primarily handles direct-action raids in hostile or sensitive environments, often killing or capturing high-value targets. Other missions include airfield seizure, special reconnaissance, personnel recovery, clandestine insertion, and site exploitation. The regiment can deploy one Ranger battalion within 18 hours of alert notification.

The 75th Ranger Regiment is one of the U.S. military's most extensively used units. On December 17, 2020, it marked 7,000 consecutive days of combat operations.

## Normandy landings

*D-Day beaches. Wikimedia Commons has media related to Battle of Normandy landing sites. Extended onsite interview of Dwight Eisenhower on his D-Day recollections*

The Normandy landings were the landing operations and associated airborne operations on 6 June 1944 of the Allied invasion of Normandy in Operation Overlord during the Second World War. Codenamed Operation Neptune and often referred to as D-Day (after the military term), it is the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation began the liberation of France, and the rest of Western Europe, and laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front.

Planning for the operation began in 1943. In the months leading up to the invasion, the Allies conducted a substantial military deception, codenamed Operation Bodyguard, to mislead the Germans as to the date and location of the main Allied landings. The weather on the day selected for D-Day was not ideal, and the operation had to be delayed 24 hours; a further postponement would have meant a delay of at least two weeks, as the planners had requirements for the phase of the moon, the tides, and time of day, that meant only a few days each month were deemed suitable. German leader Adolf Hitler placed Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in command of German forces and developing fortifications along the Atlantic Wall in anticipation of an invasion. US president Franklin D. Roosevelt placed Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower in command of Allied forces.

The invasion began shortly after midnight on the morning of 6 June with extensive aerial and naval bombardment as well as an airborne assault—the landing of 24,000 American, British, and Canadian airborne troops. The early morning aerial assault was soon followed by Allied amphibious landings on the coast of France c. 06:30. The target 80-kilometre (50 mi) stretch of the Normandy coast was divided into five sectors: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Strong winds blew the landing craft east of their intended positions, particularly at Utah and Omaha.

The men landed under heavy fire from gun emplacements overlooking the beaches, and the shore was mined and covered with obstacles such as wooden stakes, metal tripods, and barbed wire, making the work of the

beach-clearing teams difficult and dangerous. The highest number of casualties was at Omaha, with its high cliffs. At Gold, Juno, and Sword, several fortified towns were cleared in house-to-house fighting, and two major gun emplacements at Gold were disabled using specialised tanks.

The Allies were able to establish beachheads at each of the five landing sites on the first day, but Carentan, Saint-Lô, and Bayeux remained in German hands. Caen, a major objective, was not captured until 21 July. Only two of the beaches (Juno and Gold) were linked on the first day, and all five beachheads were not connected until 12 June. German casualties on D-Day have been estimated at 4,000 to 9,000 men. Allied casualties were at least 10,000, with 4,414 confirmed dead.

## Operation Overlord

*German-occupied Western Europe during World War II. The operation was launched on 6 June 1944 (D-Day) with the Normandy landings (Operation Neptune). A 1,200-plane*

Operation Overlord was the codename for the Battle of Normandy, the Allied operation that launched the successful liberation of German-occupied Western Europe during World War II. The operation was launched on 6 June 1944 (D-Day) with the Normandy landings (Operation Neptune). A 1,200-plane airborne assault preceded an amphibious assault involving more than 5,000 vessels. Nearly 160,000 troops crossed the English Channel on 6 June, and more than two million Allied troops were in France by the end of August.

The decision to undertake cross-channel landings in 1944 was made at the Trident Conference in Washington in May 1943. American General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed commander of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, and British General Bernard Montgomery was named commander of the 21st Army Group, which comprised all the land forces involved in the operation. The Normandy coast in northwestern France was chosen as the site of the landings, with the Americans assigned to land at sectors codenamed Utah and Omaha, the British at Sword and Gold, and the Canadians at Juno. To meet the conditions expected on the Normandy beachhead, special technology was developed, including two artificial ports called Mulberry harbours and an array of specialised tanks nicknamed Hobart's Funnies. In the months leading up to the landings, the Allies conducted Operation Bodyguard, a substantial military deception that used electronic and visual misinformation to mislead the Germans as to the date and location of the main Allied landings. Adolf Hitler placed Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in charge of developing fortifications all along Hitler's proclaimed Atlantic Wall in anticipation of landings in France.

The Allies failed to accomplish their objectives for the first day, but gained a tenuous foothold that they gradually expanded when they captured the port at Cherbourg on 26 June and the city of Caen on 21 July. A failed counterattack by German forces in response to Allied advances on 7 August left 50,000 soldiers of the German 7th Army trapped in the Falaise pocket by 19 August. The Allies launched a second invasion from the Mediterranean Sea of southern France (code-named Operation Dragoon) on 15 August, and the Liberation of Paris followed on 25 August. German forces retreated east across the Seine on 30 August 1944, marking the close of Operation Overlord.

## 5th Ranger Battalion

*The 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion was a Ranger battalion activated during World War II on 1 September 1943 at Camp Forrest, Tennessee. By this time, while*

The 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion was a Ranger battalion activated during World War II on 1 September 1943 at Camp Forrest, Tennessee. By this time, while in maneuvers on the United States, they were commanded by the Major Owen Carter. Later, when they moved to England, they were commanded by Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Max Schneider, former executive officer of the 4th Ranger Battalion, who led the 5th Rangers as part of the Provisional Ranger Group commanded by Colonel James Earl Rudder.

## Omaha Beach

*general, as of 2025, the last surviving U.S. Army Ranger of those who landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day*  
*Official estimates put the casualties for A/116 as*

Omaha Beach was one of five beach landing sectors of the amphibious assault component of Operation Overlord during the Second World War.

On June 6, 1944, the Allies invaded German-occupied France with the Normandy landings. "Omaha" refers to an 8-kilometer (5 mi) section of the coast of Normandy, France, facing the English Channel, from west of Sainte-Honorine-des-Pertes to east of Vierville-sur-Mer on the right bank of the Douve river estuary. Landings here were necessary to link the British landings to the east at Gold with the American landing to the west at Utah, thus providing a continuous lodgement on the Normandy coast of the Baie de Seine (Bay of the Seine River). Taking Omaha was to be the responsibility of United States Army troops, with sea transport, and a naval bombardment force provided predominantly by the United States Navy and Coast Guard, with contributions from the British, Canadian and Free French navies.

The primary objective at Omaha was to secure a beachhead 8 kilometers (5 miles) deep, between Port-en-Bessin and the Vire river, linking with the British landings at Gold to the east, and reaching the area of Isigny to the west to link up with VII Corps landing at Utah. The untested American 29th Infantry Division, along with nine companies of U.S. Army Rangers redirected from Pointe du Hoc, assaulted the western half of the beach. The battle-hardened 1st Infantry Division was given the eastern half.

Opposing the landings was the German 352nd Infantry Division. Of its 12,020 men, 6,800 were experienced combat troops, detailed to defend a 53-kilometer (33 mi) front. The German strategy was based on defeating any seaborne assault at the water line, and the defenses were mainly deployed in strongpoints along the coast.

The Allied plan called for initial assault waves of tanks, infantry, and combat engineer forces to reduce the coastal defenses, allowing larger ships to land in follow-up waves. But very little went as planned. Difficulties in navigation caused most of the landing craft to miss their targets throughout the day. The defenses were unexpectedly strong, and inflicted substantial casualties on landing U.S. troops. Under intense fire, the engineers struggled to clear the beach obstacles; later landings bunched up around the few channels that were cleared. Weakened by the casualties taken just in landing, the surviving assault troops could not clear the exits off the beach. This caused further problems and consequent delays for later landings. Small penetrations were eventually achieved by groups of survivors making improvised assaults, scaling the bluffs between the most well-defended points. By the end of the day, two small isolated footholds had been won, which were subsequently exploited against weaker defenses further inland, achieving the original D-Day objectives over the following days.

Pointe du Hoc

*2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions were given the task of assaulting the strong point early on D-Day. Elements of the 2nd Battalion went in to attack Pointe*

La Pointe du Hoc (French pronunciation: [pwɑ̃t dy ʔk]) is a promontory with a 35-metre (110 ft) cliff overlooking the English Channel on the northwestern coast of Normandy in the Calvados department, France.

In World War II, Pointe du Hoc was the location of a series of German bunkers and machine gun posts. Prior to the invasion of Normandy, the German army fortified the area with concrete casemates and gun pits. On D-Day, the United States Army Provisional Ranger Group attacked and captured Pointe du Hoc after scaling the cliffs. United States generals including Dwight D. Eisenhower had determined that the place housed artillery that could slow down nearby beach attacks.

John C. Raaen Jr.

*for his role in the D-Day landings on Omaha Beach, as a company commander in the 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion, for which he received the Silver Star.*

John Carpenter Raaen Jr. (born April 22, 1922) is a retired American military officer who served in the United States Army, reaching the rank of major general. He is a decorated combat veteran of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. He is best known for his role in the D-Day landings on Omaha Beach, as a company commander in the 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion, for which he received the Silver Star. Subsequently, he was awarded two Bronze Star Medals for valor for his heroic actions in the Brittany campaign. Raaen then served in senior ordnance roles during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, earning numerous awards, including four Legion of Merit medals in Vietnam. For his notable contributions and meritorious service, as Commanding General, Defense Fuel Supply Center, from 1976 to 1979, he was awarded the Army Distinguished Service Medal.

During his 36-year career, Raaen became a key figure in United States Army Ordnance Corps, notably as the driving force behind the Single Manager for Conventional Ammunition (SMCA) system, which revolutionized ammunition management across the military and is still in use today. Raaen is the author of *Intact*, a memoir of his World War II experience. As of 2025, Raaen is the last surviving United States Army Rangers officer who participated in the initial assault on Omaha Beach, and is among the oldest surviving U.S. veterans of the Battle of Normandy.

### 3rd Canadian Division

*its arrival, the division spent three uneventful years in garrison and training duties prior to the assault landing on Juno Beach on D-Day, 6 June 1944*

The 3rd Canadian Division is a formation of the Canadian Army responsible for the command and mobilization of all army units in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, as well as Northwestern Ontario including the city of Thunder Bay.

It was first created as a formation of the Canadian Corps during the First World War. It was stood down following the war and was later reactivated as the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division during the Second World War. The second iteration served with distinction from 1941 to 1945, taking part in the D-Day landings of 6 June 1944. A duplicate of the 3rd Canadian Division was formed in 1945 to serve on occupation duty in Germany and was disbanded the following year.

### 2nd Ranger Battalion

*D-Day objectives. Able suffered up to 96% casualties with just two men making it off the beaches. The 2nd Rangers were later involved in the Battle for*

The 2nd Ranger Battalion, currently based at Joint Base Lewis–McChord south of Seattle, Washington, United States, is one of three ranger battalions belonging to the United States Army's 75th Ranger Regiment.

### Ranger School

*engage the enemy in close combat and direct fire battles. Ranger training was established in September 1950 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The Ranger course*

The Ranger School is a 62-day United States Army small unit tactics and leadership course that develops functional skills directly related to units whose mission is to engage the enemy in close combat and direct fire battles. Ranger training was established in September 1950 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The Ranger course has changed little since its inception. Since 1995, it was an eight-week course divided into three phases. The 62 day course of instruction is divided into three phases: Darby Phase, Mountain Phase, and Swamp Phase.

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