



Scripts.com

D-Day 6.6.1944

By Andrew Bampfield

D. Day

May 1940.

The British are routed
on the beaches of France.

But Churchill vowed one day to return.

For four years, the world waited.

On June 6th, 1944,

the waiting was finally over.

The hour of our greatest
effort and action is approaching.

It will be a day of endless
and bloody battle.

We march with valiant allies
who count on us as we count on them.

In the air, at sea and on land.

And when the signal is given,
a whole circle of avenging nations
will hurl themselves upon the foe.

At midnight, June 6th 1944,

British elite forces
set out on a top-secret mission.

Four O.K. - This mission is
dangerous, but it's crucial.

If they fail,
thousands of lives will be lost.

At dawn, off the Normandy coast,
a massive armada assembles undetected,
and the first ground troops
set foot in occupied France.

Amongst them, an American,
armed only with a camera.

You know what? I'm feeling lucky.

Shoot them before they shoot you.

That's what my dad said before I left.

At noon, British troops advance inland,
ready for the violent counter-attack
they know will come.

At 3 p. m. in the city of Caen,
a French Resistance worker
has just minutes

to save a hospital from Allied bombing.

Before midnight, the Allies
must establish a bridgehead in France,
the first step in the liberation of Europe

and the defeat of the Nazis.
It will be a day on which ordinary people
will be called upon to do
extraordinary things.
These are the true stories
of some of those who lived through D-Day.
Collins, meet England.
England, meet Collins.
This is where Bob Hope's from.
What are you talking about, Collins?
Bob Hope's an American.
No, I read it. He was born in England.
I swear to God, Collins, I'm gonna,
I'm gonna knock you out
if you don't stop winding me up!
Bob Hope!
By January 1944,
one in ten of all men in Great Britain
is an Allied soldier,
and one of them, the new commander
of the forces of the free world,
is a 54-year-old farmer's son from Texas.
General Dwight David Eisenhower,
Supreme Commander-in-Chief
of the Allied invasion forces,
is himself invaded by war correspondents
at his London headquarters.
In securing these first pictures
since his arrival,
we also have the first newsreel message
from the leader of the second front.
Goddamn reporters!
How am I supposed to get the job done
when we've got those bloodhounds
snooping around the whole time?
Perhaps you'll just have
to learn to enjoy their company.
Ike has inherited a plan.
Hitler is consumed
by his fight against the Russians.
The Allies know
he cannot fight on two fronts.
If they can force him to do so,
they can bring a swift end to the war.

The plan is to invade France
and open the second front.
Gentlemen, Berlin will expect us
to take the shortest
crossing from Dover to Calais,
where their defences are strongest.
We will surprise them
by taking the long crossing to Normandy.
We will land five divisions,
establish a bridgehead and
drive inland as far as possible.
A vicious counter-offensive
from the enemy will come on that day.
We will repel it.
This is our chance. We must seize it.
We have six months to prepare.
Pitted against Eisenhower
is Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.
Hitler has given his most brilliant
general the task of creating
an impregnable barrier
against the anticipated invasion.
Field Marshal Rommel
inspects the Atlantic wall.
It's the longest defence system
in the world,
running from the North Pole
to the Pyrenees.
These brave German soldiers stand ready to
defend our European culture and freedom.
But behind the propaganda
the reality is very different.
Rommel has asked to be joined
in France by his old colleague
Lieutenant-General Hans Speidel.
Temporary accommodation for
U.S troops of the first army...
As the clock ticks for Rommel,
in central London,
an operation of a very different kind
is being put into action.
Landing craft on the Thames Estuary,
100/ canvas.
And tanks in the south of England...

100/ rubber.

Oxford academic John Masterman is
in charge of a committee of spymasters.

Their task -

to run an intelligence operation

to deceive and confuse

the German High Command.

Operation Fortitude.

The plan to invade France

is well under way -

a good plan,

but with one great risk attached.

The enemy will be expecting it.

The fact is, you can't hide an invading
army. But you can obscure its objectives.

We must convince the enemy

that "Overlord" is not the invasion

but a diversion from the main assault

which will take place

elsewhere at a later date.

We will spin two webs of deceit.

The first that there is an army in

Scotland preparing to invade Norway.

The second that there is an army in the
south preparing to invade Pas-de-Calais.

Which is, of course,

where they are expecting the invasion.

Between now and D-Day,

our double agents

will feed the enemy a rich diet of lies,

washed down with a few harmless truths

for the sake of credibility.

The question is,

which double agents do we use?

In a London suburb is the man Berlin

believes to be their top secret agent,

Juan Pujol, a Spaniard, sending them

intelligence from his network of spies.

In fact, all his spies are fictional.

He is a double agent, codenamed "Garbo".

England must be destroyed and dominated.

With a raised arm I end this letter with

a pious remembrance for all our dead.

Berlin will be delighted

with their new recruits in Swansea.
Who will be the brothers
in the Aryan World Order?
I was thinking of creating
a retired sailor,
a few salesmen, a WREN, perhaps.
And how's your mistress, Agent J5?
Still giving me information
from the War Office.
Still asking for clothes and perfume?
She's a very demanding woman.
So... this makes
26 wonderful works of fiction.
The more agents,
the more information, the more risk.
Sometimes I worry
the whole house of cards could collapse.
It is elaborate and beautiful.
But fragile.
Many of the people of France
accept neither capitulation nor servitude.
It is therefore essential to gather as
large a French fighting force as possible.
I invite all those citizens who seek
liberty to listen to me and follow me.
Long live France!
Despite France's fall to Hitler's forces,
over 300,000 French men and women
are involved in some form of resistance.
They relay messages, forge documents
and rescue stranded Allied airmen.
Amongst the Resistance fighters is
a 24-year-old teacher, Andr Heintz.
I was part of the Resistance
between 1940 and 1944.
My first group was disbanded.
My second leader was arrested and shot.
I am very lucky to have survived.
But by the spring of '44, the most crucial
aspect of French resistance work
is the mapping of the German defences
on the Normandy beaches.
Near the village of Merville they have
identified a lethal threat to the Allies -

a heavy gun battery
within range of the beaches.
I was meant to stand in for the captain
because he was going on holiday.
I didn't want to shoot,
so I was trained as a surveyor.
I was 22 years old.
Four concrete casemates, six feet thick,
steel doors front and rear.
15 to 20 gun pits,
four to five machine guns in each.
Two six-foot barbed-wire perimeter fences,
anti-tank ditches and a minefield.
The daunting challenge of putting the
Merville battery out of action on D-Day
has been given to
the 9th Parachute Battalion,
under the command
of Lieutenant-Colonel Terence Otway.
The battery was sighted
to fire along the length of Sword Beach,
across which the British Third
Infantry Division was going to land.
Everybody emphasised to me personally
what would happen if we failed.
Thousands of men killed on the beach.
Each casemate has a howitzer
with a seven-mile range.
They can hit incoming battleships
and the beach
where 30,000 Allied troops will land.
They can do a lot of damage.
Any questions?
- What is our mission, sir?
- To take it.
We have four hours to destroy the battery
before the landings begin.
B Company and "C" Company
will mount the main assault here.
A diversion party will attack
the main gate here.
A Company will arrive in gliders
immediately prior to the initial assault.
At night, sir?

Of course.

- Where will they land, sir?

On top of it.

We knew it was going
to be big and important
and that we would be up at the front
of it. But it seemed so... impossible.
If we fail, the entire Allied left flank
could be decimated.

This mission is dangerous,
but it's crucial.

The imminent invasion
is the world's biggest story
and a magnet for the world's
biggest storytellers.

London felt like
the capital of the whole world.

It was the place to be,
especially if you were a journalist.

Everyone looked to Capa to be
the big-shot photographer for the invasion
because he had been covering war
ever since the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Gotcha!

Bob had a sense of his own destiny,
which was tragic, in a way,
because his destiny was to...
to cover the world at its worst.

- I can't believe you're back.

- Of course I'm back.

I told the office

I hadn't seen my gal in seven months.

Well course I'm back.

You're a terrible liar.

OK, but I want to be with the boys
when they liberate my Paris.

I won't miss that.

Let's not talk about the war.

That's not what we're here for.

Pinky was not terribly serious,
except about lovemaking.

She was madly in love with Capa.

I thought you weren't wasting film.

Those guys are counting on me

to get the pictures of the big day.
Robert Capa,
humanitarian and war photographer.
I'm a gambler, not a humanitarian.
Humanitarians believe in humanity.
For me, it's just a matter
of drawing the right cards.
While Capa relaxes in London,
Rommel inspects the beach
the Allies have already codenamed "Omaha".
He is battling to reinforce
the Normandy beach defences
and place armoured divisions close inland.
After Rommel was here, we started
to think, "This is getting serious. "
Before that,
we were quite relaxed about it,
but suddenly there was Rommel saying,
"They'll come here. "
Move!
Bang! Let's go!
Come on, let's go!
Move! Move!
We had nine rehearsals by night and day.
They had to do it time and time again
until they were perfect.
Too slow! Too late!
If you hesitate, you could be shot.
And they understood that.
Come in from the right!
Where's that bloody flamethrower?
Idle bastards,
get in here!
The last time we did it, it was for real.
We had a tremendous
kind of gung-ho feeling.
OK, stop!
Back to the start!
It was different.
We're good. We're bloody good!
Not bloody good enough. Let's go!
Did you ask Washington
about landing craft?
They're thinking about it.

Perhaps we could tell them not to think,
just to do it.

Amongst the many problems
Eisenhower must solve
is the risk of taking a vast armada across
100 miles of heavily patrolled water.

What about the rehearsals
for the landings?

Exercise Tiger is due
to take place

Yeah.

- off the south coast on April 28th, sir.

Half of them have never
even tasted battle before.

The least we can do
is prepare them for it.

Exercise Tiger
is a major rehearsal for D-Day.

Not just the beach landings,
but also the complex naval operations.

The seas between here and Normandy
are rife with danger.

We will take troops by night
across open water
to designated target beaches
on the south coast.

This is a training exercise, but for
everyone involved, it's the real thing.

It was getting us ready for Normandy
is what it was doing.

It was such a beautiful morning
for such a tragedy to happen.

I'm in one.

Pair of queens.

Naval wins.

- How old are you, kid?

- 15.

What are you doing here?

Best small-boat handler in the US Navy.

Eddie McCann is
a landing-craft helmsman on LSC515.

In command of the ship
is Lieutenant John Doyle.

Full ahead both.

420, full ahead both. Aye, sir.
The men seem pretty happy, sir.
I don't want them to be happy.
I want 'em to be ready.
In overall command of the operation,
Commander Bernard Skahill.
There are eight vessels in the convoy.
Each one is carrying
over 400 American troops,
many of them teenagers
with no combat experience.
Life preservers!
Life preservers!
Anyone know what we do with these?
You gonna show us how to put 'em on?
Figure it out!
Radio.
Message Azalea. Contact surface.
Three targets bearing 275-280.
- What's going on?
- Three vessels approaching from the stern.
- That could be support.
- Maybe.
- No response from Azalea, skipper.
- Keep trying.
On one of his regular forays
into the English Channel,
German E-boat Captain Hans Schirren
has stumbled upon Exercise Tiger.
Fast, elusive and heavily armed,
E- boats are a fearsome adversary.
We wanted to sink ships, not kill people.
But war is war, and in war, people die.
You just can't avoid that.
We saw the convoy, if you like, marching
by us. We saw the boats and fired.
- Damn! They're in trouble.
- E-boats?
- Could be. Could be subs.
- Bridge, Signals.
Bridge.
Mayday. 531, 507. Both hit.
We're under attack.
Make to their location. Urgent.

- Sound general quarters.
- Doyle?
Sound general quarters.
Let's go! Let's go!
OK, green 90!
They're firing at us!
Hold your fire! Stop firing!
You don't know who you're aiming at!
They could be ours!
It so happened I picked my headphones up
and I could hear the bridge talking.
And they're fighting,
almost coming to blows.
Orders are to return to port.
They do not take account
of our being attacked.
We cannot afford to lose
more men or boats.
Follow orders and return to port!
Two ships are going down.
There are men in the water!
You will obey these orders, Doyle!
- Stand by to pick up survivors!
- Stand by to pick up survivors.
McCann to Bridge, McCann to Bridge!
They'll freeze to death in that water.
Support'll pick 'em up.
We don't even know if we have any support.
- Sir?
- McCann, there are men in the water.
I want to send a boat out.
I'd like to volunteer, sir.
You do have a choice. You know that?
Yes, Captain. I'd like to go, sir.
- Over there!
- Ramp down.
There was men on fire.
Men whose heads were in one place,
the legs in another place.
He's dead.
Quite a few of the ones that were dead
were friends of mine,
and I had to leave them in the water.
Over there! I think I can see him moving.

Eddie McCann and Lieutenant Doyle's actions saved the lives of 132 men. Don't worry, pal. You're gonna be OK. But their heroism is not enough to prevent Exercise Tiger from being a major disaster. We think some German E-boats slipped through the destroyer screen. They sank the two LSTs and damaged one other. Casualties?

- 749

- Damn!

How in God's name can we lose two ships and over 700 men on a goddamn training exercise? Our radio operators were working on a different frequency than the Brits, sir. And it seems as if the troops hadn't been shown how to use their life preservers.

- Any captured?

- We don't know, sir.

And the men with security clearance for "Overlord"? Are they accounted for? Yes, sir. Ten. All dead. Well...

At least we know they won't talk. By May 1944, the elite forces are ready, but their destination remains top secret and security is paramount. Training is over chaps... It was getting near the time now. I took my platoon out into the middle of a football field and told them what I had just been told by the colonel. Our target is, of course, a gun battery. And to put it bluntly, it's lethal. If we don't put it out of action, a lot of men will die. Our second mission is to take a radar station about a mile from the battery.

Must be in France, then.
Each of us knows his job
and there is no doubt in my mind
that we will do it...
provided we show organisation,
precision and surprise.
And no cock-ups.
Good. Thank you.
Oh, and one more thing.
Special operation tonight, 2100 hours.
- Oh, sir!
- The colonel's orders.
This is the BBC Home Service.
Here is the nine o'clock news
and this is John Snagg speaking.
Carry on, gentlemen.
That's what I call live ammo.
Strangest special operation
I've ever been on!
Any plans for after the war, Mike?
After the war?
Have to be positive.
- I was thinking about some farming.
- Dairy?
- Oranges.
- Oranges?
Mike Dowling and I had a strange in-joke
about which one of us would,
more or less, be killed first.
Me and the boys are having a wager.
Thought you'd like to join in.
That is one of the things that was part of
building up this little barrier to death.
I'll put five guineas on myself
or Lieutenant Dowling here.
Only five?
I'll put ten on myself.
I'm in better shape than he is.
We laughed at death, I think.
There was no use in pandering to it.
I found it worked.
Pour onto our hearts
that most excellent gift of charity.
The very bond of peace...

Have a good evening last night?

Yes, sir.

The men are very grateful.

It's nice to have some female company.

In fact, they were members
of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

I wanted to find out
how tight our security was,
see if the men got careless
with their pillow talk.

- Isn't that a bit underhand?

- No one said anything.

Remarkably restrained.

The only person who lost sight of his
responsibilities was you, Lieutenant.

- Sir?

- Your briefing to the men.

You virtually identified
the location of the target.

I was passing on the details
of the mission, sir.

There are only four coastal radar stations
in mainland Europe next to a gun battery.

I was simply telling men whom I trust...

Corporal Philips is Internal Security.

Being liked by your men is gratifying,
but it is a luxury you cannot afford.

This operation is vital
to the entire Allied assault.

My job is to ensure
that nothing jeopardises it.

The lives of my men
or the invasion itself.

- Sir...

- I could have you court-martialled!

You're bloody lucky that you're needed!

As D-Day approaches,
the Allies are increasingly worried
by the strengthening of Rommel's defences.
Looming above them is the fear that
the Germans may have devised a new weapon
which could decimate
the troops as they land.

Lieutenant Lane, we have a problem.

Intelligence suggests
Rommel has a new type of mine.
Unusual explosions, several at a time,
as though they're joined together.
What can the French tell us?
Nothing. That source has dried up.
Permanently?
- Probably.
- So you want us to take a closer look?
Overlord is ready to go
and we cannot afford any hitches.
You know the stakes and the risks.
Hitler's orders are for all captured
commandos to be executed,
but we have no choice.
I never really expected to survive,
so I was quite ready for it.
But I kept on thinking
that what was important
was to do what was possible
before I was killed.
29-year-old Hungarian Djury Lanyi
has changed identity
to fight with the British.
Having served as a saboteur
with the French Resistance,
he is now a member
of a specialist commando unit.
You're from one of those special units,
aren't you?
Is it true you're all Jewish foreigners?
Beats me why you help us fight.
It's better if we don't tell each other
much about ourselves.
Name and rank,
that's all they'll get from me.
Everybody talks eventually.
Ordinary landmine.
It's rusty because of the water.
- Could that be what makes it sensitive?
- Maybe.
It's more likely because they're
close together, set each other off.
Let's check inland.

Bollocks! We've been spotted!

- We're surrounded!

- What do we do now?

Wait to be captured.

Commando!

As the war drags on
and German hopes of victory have dwindled,
many senior commanders have become
disillusioned with their leader.

A few have even begun
to think the unthinkable,
that the time has come to replace Hitler.
They are looking for a figurehead.

If discovered,
they will be executed for treason.

One of them is at the heart of Rommel's
inner circle, his deputy, Hans Speidel.

I was scared. Naturally, I was scared.

There I was in enemy country
and anything could happen to me.

And it was a very uncomfortable,
unpleasant situation, as you can imagine.

Rommel often makes a point of personally
interrogating captured officers.

Not only to extract information,
but to better judge the calibre
of the men he is fighting.

We have orders to... hinrichten,
execute saboteurs.

If you think I'm a saboteur,
why do you invite me here?

- So this is an invitation?

- Yes. And an honour.

You are a commando?

The best soldiers in the world.

Then we had
this extraordinary conversation
which is recorded in the archives
of the German High Command,
word by word.

How is my friend Montgomery?

Fine, I believe.

I only know what I read in the paper.

So when is it coming? The invasion?

I have no idea. Nobody tells me anything.
But if it were up to me, I would
probably go for the shortest crossing.
I realised it was
a very peculiar situation.
May I ask a question?
There I was sitting talking
to the top-dog general in Germany.
Of course.
Do you think soldiers are the right people
to occupy a country once it's conquered?
Yes, I do.
Of course, we are trained to fight,
but we are also adaptable.
I believe a good soldier
has a sense of duty.
A sense of responsibility.
Do you agree?
I think a good soldier
is an honourable soldier.
And I said to myself,
"As long as he's enjoying it,
I think that might save my neck.
It's a pity the Germans and British
aren't fighting together.
- Against who?
- The Russians, of course.
I think there are too many differences
between us for us ever to be allies.
No, what differences?
Treatment of the Jews, for example.
Now you are talking about politics!
That has nothing to do with us!
Halt.
Don't worry. You will not be harmed.
You have my word as a fellow soldier.
Your Majesty, fellow soldiers,
Operation Overlord is ready.
We have assembled
the most formidable fighting force...
Admiral Ramsay,
Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief.
The naval plan is as follows -
five assault forces preceded by...

Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory,
Allied Air Commander-in-Chief.
The air plan is to exploit a situation...
General Bernard Montgomery,
C- in-C, 21st Army Group.
Our priorities -
to seize the beaches and drive inland.
The threat will come
from Rommel's Panzer assault.
The first few days will be the vital ones.
It is in those days
that this battle will be won.
There will be much
hard fighting on all fronts,
but we shall win in the end.
Let us go forward to victory.
In the battle to keep
the Germans guessing,
the time has come for the British
spymasters to play their trump card
and take an extraordinary risk.
Now then, D-Day itself...
It is essential that
we maintain the deception
for at least three days
after the landings.
Garbo could send a message
saying it isn't the real invasion.
Be hard to convince them
when they have
150,000 troops on their doorstep!
To sell them the lie,
we must give them a truth.
We give them a piece of information
which they consider extremely valuable.
They will then be in the right frame
of mind to be deceived.
- Isn't that rather dangerous?
- Yes, it is.
Wars are like that, I suppose.
It's a nuisance,
but there's nothing we can do about it.
Two messages.
In the first, we give them the truth.

We say Allied troops are due to land.
On D-Day?
That information is critical.
We can't warn them.
You're their main agent.
If they see troops landing and hear
nothing from you,
they'll be suspicious.
The message must be early
enough to be a warning,
but too late to take action.
That way we seal your credibility.
The trap is set and
we send the second message.
I see.
Agent 4 is the best man for the job.
In Southampton?
He's in the right place.
He will tell them
that he has seen troops boarding ships.
He's in a sealed camp.
He can't contact the outside.
I will tell them he deserted
with two other Americans,
Ah, paratroopers.
Hmm. Signalmen or something.
- Vomit bags.
- I beg your pardon!
He saw vomit bags being
handed out to soldiers,
vomit bags and cold rations.
For the long boat trip to Normandy.
Subtle, but very believable.
Gentlemen, in these final days,
we will use our air superiority
to increase attacks
on the German transportation network.
Regrettably,
there will be civilian casualties...
but I want to share a message I received
from the leader of the Free French Forces.
He says, "General,
this is war and we expect people to die.
We would accept twice the casualties

if it meant liberation.
There was this sense of might
as well raise hell
because the worst is coming.
Charlie! Have you met John Morris,
my picture editor at "Life"?
Look at you. You're impossible!
You take fairly sharp pictures,
you're quite good-looking,
you get around,
and everyone wants a piece of you.
You're infectious.
Infectious? Is it terminal?
I think it might be for Pinky.
It's the way you carry it off
that drives her crazy.
Me too!
Hey! You wanna dance? For old times' sake?
You want a slap in the face
for old times' sake?
Can I have this dance?
Oh, God, please!
This one has got two left feet!
- Do you forgive me?
- For what?
Not being the man you want me to be.
I will never forgive you for that.
You know the thing about gamblers?
What is it that keeps them
coming back to the table?
- The money, winning?
- Losing. But not me.
I've no intention of losing.
I'll be coming home.
- OK.
- And Pinky... thank you.
For what? - For never making me
choose. Between you and the war.
Well, let's just say I'd be outnumbered.
Hello, BBC.
This is Colin Wills recording on
a quayside in Britain on June 3rd, 1944.
Across this quayside
moves a stream of men.

Men of peace going to war.
They will be among the first Allied troops
who will assault Hitler's fortress.
They count it a high honour
to be chosen for this job.
They'll do that job as well as any men
who could be chosen for it.
Have you been abroad before?
Never been outside of Herefordshire.
I went to Cardiff once.
Paris, that's where we're heading.
- Wine and birds and fancy food.
- Don't mention food!
Towards the end of 1942,
the government lowered the age
of recruiting for the services to 18.
Unfortunately for me,
I was just coming up to 18.
They said, "What would you like to do?"
I said, "Oh, RAF.
That's a nice, safe area. "
They said, "We're short of infantry.
You're going in the infantry. "
They never actually told us
that this was D-Day,
but all the boys reckoned
it was for D-Day.
You didn't really want telling, you see.
We thought about Dunkirk.
It was obvious a lot of us
were not going to come back.
Only in... in boxes, like, you know.
At noon,
we raised anchor and were ready to go.
Slowly and majestically,
as minesweepers and destroyers curved
their way into position,
we gave the lead to the other transports.
Under a gray sky, we looked at the coast
of Britain and watched it grow more dim.
Every man, soldier or sailor is learning
in detail the part he himself has to play.
The fleet of ships now embarking
on the 24-hour journey to France

is the greatest armada
the world has ever seen.
This is the opportunity
we have long awaited,
and which must be seized and pursued
with relentless determination.
The hopes and prayers of the enslaved
peoples of Europe will be with us.
We cannot fail them.
Word from the top is that "B" Company
is the safer option when we launch.
Safer?
Well, it's still in the first wave.
But it'll be behind "E" Company.
E Company goes at the front
of the front where the action is?
Action will be everywhere, Capa.
It's your choice.
You know what? I'm feeling lucky.
I'm already fleecing these guys.
I'll go with "E" Company.
If your pictures aren't good enough,
it's 'cause you're not close enough.
Thank you.
Then, just 24 hours before the invasion
is due, a sudden and violent storm breaks.
So we have to keep the ships
where they are?
Yes, sir.
And wait how long?
The tide won't be right again
for two weeks.
Then it has to improve
in the next 24 hours.
Yes, sir, but...
- This might continue?
- Indeed.
It's June, for Christ's sake!
Do you guys get a summer?
- We might have to postpone!
- When's the next window?
The 20th.
- Too late?
- Out of the question.

The troops can't sit
in those ships for two more weeks!
You plan the greatest force in history
and it ends up depending on something
you just can't control.
Get!
Now we sail steadily
nearer to the coastline of France.
Across the water we can hear the jazz
from a minesweeper's gramophone.
There's a tenseness in the air
as every man aboard waits for the moment
to which everything has been bent
in these last days.
Operation postponed.
Repeat, operation postponed.
Vessels to remain at sea. All servicemen
to await further instructions.
Oh, bloody hell, that's great!
A glimmer of hope?
What kind of glimmer are we talking here?
The situation will change little,
but we predict a slight improvement
on the night of the 5th,
increased visibility,
low chance of rain, less cloud cover,
light winds.
But for how long?
To answer that question would make me
a guesser, sir, not a meteorologist.
So do we take the risk and go?
Or do we bring them all back?
All right.
Let's go.
I heard the dice are on the carpet order
for destroying trains and railway lines.
For the first time in my life
I knew for sure the future.
Dear Iris, boys and Molly...
Dear Mother and Father,
thank you for your letter...
Remember that I'm doing all right...
I can hear the rain, but nothing will
dampen our resolve to get the job done.

I got the packet of gifts
and I was mighty grateful...
I hope this letter
finds you safe and well...
Look after yourselves and tell Mary...
.. get the job done
and get home as soon as possible.
Much love, Daddy.

- Do you mind?
- You want to take a photo?
- He wants to take a photo.
- Joe, come here, man!

Look at that dirt!
What's happened to you over there?
Soldiers, sailors and airmen
of the Allied Expeditionary Force,
you are about to embark
upon the great crusade
toward which we have striven
these many months.
The eyes of the world are upon you.
The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving
people everywhere march with you.
Our landings in the
Cherbourg Le Havre area
have failed to gain
a satisfactory foothold
and I have withdrawn the troops.
My decision to attack
at this time and place
was based upon
the best information available.
If any blame or fault attaches
to the attempt, it is mine alone.
Just in case.
Just in case.
Agent 4 broke out of his sealed camp
yesterday with two Americans
from 926 Signal Corps.
He has reported to me that soldiers
of the Canadian Third Division
have been issued
with vomit bags and cold rations.
I believe a major invasion

will be coming tonight.
We were given
a gramophone and some records.
And sometimes if there was good weather,
we'd sit outside the bunker and sing.
My dear parents,
I hope you are well
and not worrying about me.
The invasion is coming,
we don't know where.
Every night they bomb inland...
- Coffee?
- No, thanks!
As long as the weather is bad,
they can't land on the beaches.
They were very good.
Average age 20. Youngest 18.
So it shows how many young men
there were,
many really young men.
One of the things I said to them was,
"Some of us are not going to come back.
You must all realise that.
It may be you, it may be me.
They all knew that.
It was drizzle and pretty bad
weather for an invasion,
with quite a lot of fog.
I was just daydreaming, really.
I was very confident
that it'd be all right.
But it was kind of the feeling
of being balanced on the head of a pin.
Stand up! Stand up for equipment check!
- Stand up for equipment check!
- Stand up for equipment check!
- Six OK!
- Five OK!
- Four OK!
- Three OK!
- Two OK!
- One OK!
Come on!
Go! Go!

Punch!

- Punch!

- Judy!

- Seen any of the others?

- No, sir.

Come on. This way.

Just a few miles away,

the armada of over 5,000 ships

has arrived completely undetected.

The British, who will land on Sword Beach,

wait for the signal that Otway's men

have destroyed the guns at Merville.

He has just three hours

before the landings begin.

- How many men have we got?

- Less than 100.

30 from the diversion party,

30 from "B" Company,

10 from "C" Company.

Find out if the engineers have arrived.

They never made it, sir.

No sign of the mortar party either.

We have nothing to signal the gliders in.

I saw Colonel Otway looking...

I can only describe it as looking as if

he'd been taken out of a deep freeze.

He was stiff and white

and obviously very uncomfortable.

- Any weapons canisters?

- No, sir.

80% of my men and half my equipment

have landed in the wrong bloody place!

Shall we wait, sir?

No time to wait!

And he said, "Get over there, Alan!

That's "C" Company. "

And "C" Company was about three men,

which struck me as being

a rather limited force.

Ten miles inland,

the 21st Panzer Division,

the enemy force that could wreak havoc on

the beaches, are, as usual, on stand-by.

Sir, still fewer than a quarter of the men

have turned up.
And the mine clearers
didn't get their equipment.
They've cleared by hand
and left boot tracks.
What are we going to do, sir?
Do? Attack it, of course.
Martin's men will carry out the diversion.
Dowling, you will breach the perimeter
and attack casemate two.
Jefferson, attack casemate one.
Russ and Long will attack three and four.
- What about demolition charges, sir?
- Improvise.
Sir.
We attack... in five minutes.
Prepare your men.
Gentlemen,
a lot of people are relying on us.
And I'm relying on you.
I had a choice, didn't I?
Give up or go on.
Could you face your friends?
Could you have people point at you
and say, "He gave up"?
No.
So I decided to go.
And we went.
We divide into groups,
run like hell and hope for the best?
More or less.
Listen up, everyone. This is it.
This is what we've all been waiting to do.
There aren't many of us,
but that won't matter.
The fact is,
you're all bloody good men, the best.
In, get in! Get in!
At 4.30 a. m, Sergeant
Buskotte says on the line,
Paratroopers are in the battery.
We're in hand-to-hand fighting.
Then the attackers put phosphor grenades
into the ventilation shafts.

I heard Buskotte say,
"We are suffocating. "
I heard some were praying,
the Lord's Prayer,
and others were cursing.
I was hearing them suffocating
and wrestling with death.
Suddenly I heard myself saying,
"I'm going to get you out of this. "
I thought,
"How the hell am I going to do that?"
Sort that bloody machine-gun out!
Go on, Jefferson!
And then I felt something
whipping me and I went down.
And I couldn't get up
with left arm and left leg both hit.
Get the bastards!
And I watched my soldiers going in...
and I was immensely proud of them.
Clear!
Clear!
Move!
Sir! Battery taken, sir!
- Guns taken out?
- I think so.
- Bloody well go back and make sure!
- Sir!
Move it, Dowling!
Go! Watch out!
Mike Dowling and I knew
that one of us wouldn't be coming back.
Shells incoming!
Last time I ever saw him.
Hang on.
I said, "Hang on? I can't move"
He said, "Just a minute.
Keep still. I'll put you in my picture. "
He was the war artist, Albert Richards.
- What the hell are you doing here?
- Morning, Alan.
I'll put you in the official picture,
call it "The Wounded Soldier".
What are you doing, you bloody fool?

It could be booby-trapped!
Don't call your commanding
officer a "bloody fool"!
I did a count of the men on their feet,
and of the 150 with which we'd attacked,
we had 65.
We have done what we were sent to do.
Those guns will not fire on the beaches.
Those men on the beaches will come
through without the appalling casualties.
We were rather pleased with ourselves.
Then I saw the ships.
It was a wall above the water.
It looked like a compact mass
coming towards you.
And then it started.
My God!
And first of all, the cruisers started,
opening fire on the beach
which we could see
quite plainly in the dim morning light.
And soon the air grew heavy
with the smell of cordite,
and looking along the beach we could see
the explosions of our artillery
creating a great cloud and fog of smoke.
And as the light broke
and we really could see around us,
we began to become aware
of the formidable character
of this invasion fleet of
which we were a part.
Hey, you better get back, Myers.
You still owe me 20 bucks from that game.
You give me a very warm
feeling inside, Capa.
I'll give you that!
Hey, Lieutenant! You don't look so good!
Hey, listen, Collins!
Collins! You think that thing's
gonna save your life?
It could kill you just as quick.
You jump in the water
with that strap so tight,

your helmet'll fill up
and snap your neck off.
One of the first beaches
troops are due to land on is "Omaha".
Among the men,
the US First Infantry Division.
Piloting them ashore is 15-year-old
survivor of Exercise Tiger, Eddie McCann.
I was assigned the first wave.
I wasn't really prepared
for what came about.
There's a certain smell... to hot blood.
Believe me, I smelled it that day.
The average age
of the Americans was 20 or 21.
I was 17 years old.
I turned 18 in Normandy.
The first wave on Omaha
suffered 90/ casualties.
Robert Capa will go ashore just
two minutes after the landings begin.
The gunfire was intense, terrifying.
I wanted shelter
but I knew I had a job to do.
I had to talk to remind myself
I was still alive.
I remembered an old line
from the Spanish Civil War:
This is a very serious business.
What can you see? Tell me.
- You don't wanna know, Capa.
- Tell me.
It's Ma. She's sitting on the front porch
and she's waving my insurance policy.
The men of the 21st Panzers,
now aware of the beach landings,
have still received no orders.
There are five beaches
designated for the landings on D-Day.
Utah and Omaha are American.
Gold and Juno, British and Canadian.
And Sword Beach,
where the teenage conscripts
from the King's Shropshire Light Infantry

are waiting for their turn to land.
It's 25 minutes
before H-Hour for our force,
and overhead the thunderous roar
of Fortresses and Liberators
going in to blast the coast.
On the horizon, flash after flash
from the guns of the bombarding ships,
firing their 15- and 16-inch guns
against shore targets.
You could see ships
from horizon to horizon.
I mean, it was thick with ships,
the Channel was.
I think a lot of the lads were very
subdued. We said, "Well, this is it. "
There's probably some of us who haven't
got very long to go. And we knew that.
To us is given the honour of striking
a blow for freedom
which will live in history,
and in the better days that lie ahead,
men will speak with pride of our doings.
Let us pray that the Lord, mighty
in battle, will go forth with our armies.
Let us recall the words of a famous
soldier, spoken many years ago.
He either fears his fate too much
or his deserts are small,
who dare not put it to the touch,
to win or lose it all.
On Sword Beach, the men of the First
Special Service Commando Brigade,
led by Lord Lovatt and his piper, Bill
Millin, march ashore under heavy fire,
inspiring the young soldiers
facing battle for the first time.
I think we were frightened
when we landed.
I don't think there was a man
that wasn't frightened. I don't think so.
You still had to go on
because everybody else had to go,
so you had to go.

I've been through many battles,
but I was never as excited as
when my time came to go ashore,
for this was France
and the beginning of the end.
The rough, swirling tide carried
our assault craft over the obstacles,
and we jumped into more water
than we expected, six feet of it,
so I had to swim a yard or two with
my pack before I could wade to shore.
Then the struggle across the soft sand,
five minutes that will always
be vivid in my mind.

- Come on, Bill!

- Take cover!

- Where's Gisser?

- God knows!

Someone from "Y" Company said
we wouldn't get across the beach!

What does he know?

He was in Dunkirk.

This is gonna be different. Come on!

- Here you go, lads!

- Where did you get them from?

- What do we do next?

- Keep our heads down!

Get a move on!

You won't win the war lying down!

Come on, one, two, three, go!

Here, here and here!

They say you should never stop
in the heat of battle.

If you do,

all you will see is your own death.

And I did.

Time stood still. I was totally alone.

I saw only bodies around me.

Young men who just a few hours earlier
had been happy, human... and alive.

Without even thinking about it,

I did the only thing I could.

It seemed to take forever.

I felt the current

dragging me back towards the beach,
and it was as
if I was wading against fate.
But I knew I had to get to the boat.
I had to get out of there.
What I couldn't admit to myself
was what I knew to be the truth.
I was scared. And I was running away.
All of a sudden, there was a bang
and I had no idea what was happening.
For a crazy moment,
I thought I was on a farm.
Then I remembered,
lifejackets are lined with feathers.
That's what happens when a shell hits you.
There were body parts everywhere
and grown men weeping
at the tragedy unfolding around them.
Keeps you on your toes, getting shot at.
Last time I'm going to the seaside!
I knew it was gonna be bad,
but not that bad.
- I'm knackered.
- Bloody starved, I am.
Left half me breakfast in the Channel.
And the other half on me!
Moving out in ten minutes.
Seven miles to go.
We've got to be there by nightfall.
- Where's this place we're going?
- Town called Caen.
- What we are going for?
- We'll check out the local talent.
Our job's to liberate the town.
- What about the tanks?
- Can't get them off the beach.
Probably unloading some general's cigars!
How do we liberate Caen without tanks?
- Beats me.
- We're going seven miles on foot?
Yep. No tanks, no lift.
No tanks, no bloody protection!
As the British infantry
advance south towards Caen,

to the east of the city
and on the other side
of the River Orne
is the 21st Panzer Division.
Why, why no response?
Have they not received it?
They have to know
we warned them about the invasion.
In London, fears are growing
that the deception plan has failed.
They still don't know that the Germans
have believed Garbo's radio message
warning of the Normandy invasion.
- I will send them another message.
- One of your specials?
I will scream. I will rant.
I will remind them
how helpful I am, how useful I am.
I will make them believe I sent it.
I have received no acknowledgement.
This makes me question your
seriousness and sense of responsibility.
I therefore demand a clarification
immediately as to what has happened.
People of Western Europe.
A landing was made this morning
on the coast of France
by troops of
the Allied Expeditionary Force.
This landing is part of a United Nations
plan for the liberation of Europe,
made in conjunction
with our great Russian allies.
In the course of this campaign
for the defeat of the enemy,
you may sustain further loss and damage.
Tragic though they may be,
they are part of the price of victory.
I know I can count
on your steadfastness now,
no less than in the past.
The heroic deeds of Frenchmen who have
continued to struggle against the Nazis
have been an example

and an inspiration to all of us.
Keep your faith staunch.
At half past one, I was at home,
and a bombing took place not far from us,
and the blast caused the door at
the back of our cellar to be blown open.
Immediately I rushed to the improvised
hospital where the Red Cross was
to help to save the citizens
who were wounded.
If you are reading this document,
'you are in the immediate vicinity
of key troop movements and supplies.
These will shortly be subject
to repeated Allied attack.
You and your family must evacuate
the target area immediately.
Do not obstruct any roads.
Withdraw from the city.
Disperse over as wide an area as possible.
Leave immediately.
You do not have a minute to lose.
On Omaha Beach,
in seven and a half hours of fighting,
Franz Gockel has fired over 10,000 rounds
at the incoming American troops.
We couldn't understand
how in this rain of fire,
despite the heavy casualties,
the Americans just kept coming and coming.
At 3 p. m, the battle for
Omaha Beach is over.
War report number one.
Throughout the day,
the BBC has been telling the world
that Allied forces
have crossed the Channel into France.
General de Gaulle spoke particularly
to the people of France
on whose soil the first battles
for the liberation of Europe
are being fought.
A vast machinery of attack,
for us the means of liberation,

has been set in motion
from the shores of England.
Not long ago, it was
on this last bastion of Western Europe
that the tide of German
oppression spent itself.
Today, it is the base from which
liberty's offensive is being launched.
France, overwhelmed for four years
but never conquered,
is on her feet to take part in the fight.
In the French nation, in our empire, in
the armies, there is one will, one hope.
In London, Garbo is still waiting
to unleash the big lie.
At last, an acknowledgement.
They'd received the message,
but hadn't bothered to respond.
And your tantrum did the trick.
They swallowed the truth.
Now let's see
if they'll swallow the big lie.
I will tell them I was summoned
to the Ministry this morning.
A new directive has been issued,
top secret.
No mention is to be made of forthcoming
assaults in other areas of France.
And that will suggest that what they are
seeing in Normandy is just a diversion?
Despite driving all day,
Rommel is still 150 miles from
his headquarters at La Roche Guyon.
What is this here,
they should not be here.
The 21st Panzers should be here, not here!
In Caen prison,
captured French Resistance workers
have been listening to the Allied bombing
and with the sound has come hope.
The youngest of them
is 15-year-old Jacques Collard,
and in the next cell, artist,
teacher and mapmaker, Robert Douin.

The only chance of liberation
now lies with the British troops
who are just three miles away
in the area of the Lebissey Woods.
British, Canadian and American troops
who landed on the coast of France north
of Caen in broad daylight this morning
are already several miles inland
and covered by an ever-changing
but ever-present umbrella of fighters.
It's too early yet, much too early,
to start giving any reasons
for the comparative lack of resistance
put up by the Germans to our landing.
It is proper to report
that the first phase of the attack
on Western Europe has gone corking well.
Shoot them before they shoot you.
That's what my dad said before I left.
My dad took me to the top of a hill
and told me about the Great War.
That's what we're fighting for, he said.
That's what we're fighting for.
He said, "This is what it's all about.
It's you or the Jerries
and we don't want them here, do we?
Fire!
Fire!
Dig, Gisser, dig!
They only called him Gisser 'cause
he was always scrounging a cigarette.
Gisser tuppence for a cup of tea
or "gisser fag".
Dig, dig, dig!
Dig? You can't cut a ruddy
blancmange with this!
I might come back here
for my summer hols next year!
Make for cover!
You sort of wondered
when it was your turn.
But you just hoped it wouldn't be.
- What about Gisser?
- Move out!

Robert Douin
and 86 other French Resistance fighters
were executed by the Germans
at Caen prison on D-Day.
The Allied troops
who might have liberated them
were locked in a stalemate
with the 21st Panzer Division.
Shermans!
Shermans, fucking great!
Let's fire!
At 9 p. m. on June 6th, 1944,
the 6th Air Landing Brigade,
consisting of over 250 gliders
and 2,000 men, crossed into France.
All those who saw
this overwhelming force come into land
knew that the Allies had won the day.
In 24 hours they had landed 156,000 troops
and 20,000 vehicles on French soil.
They had not made the inroads
they had hoped for,
but the Allies had gained
a foothold in France.
The day had come
at great cost on all sides.
12,000 Allied casualties, 7,000 Germans
and over 20,000 French civilians
killed by Allied bombing.
Yet by nightfall,
the Allied bridgehead remained vulnerable.
The Germans could still mobilise powerful
forces and strangle the incursion.
But they had to judge
whether Normandy was the real thing
or whether a second,
much larger invasion was still to come.
We intercepted a German intelligence
message sent to all senior staff.
They bought every word you said.
The German High Command was still
expecting an invasion at Pas-de-Calais
until September 1944.
The double agent Juan Pujol,

codenamed Garbo,
worked for British Intelligence
until the end of the war.
In 1949, he faked his own death
and went to live in Venezuela.
In July 1944, Rommel was implicated
in a plot to assassinate Hitler.
He was threatened with a trial for treason
and forced to take his own life.
Hans Speidel escaped
implication in the plot.
He went on to become Commander-in-Chief
of Allied land forces for NATO in 1957.
General Eisenhower returned
to the United States in 1945
where he became Army Chief of Staff.
He went on to become twice
President of the United States.
Of the men of the 9th Parachute Battalion
who landed with
Lieutenant-Colonel Terence Otway,
50 were lost in the capture
of the battery at Merville.
Another 190 remain unaccounted
for to this day.
Frequently I think about the men.
They knew it was possible that
they'd have to sacrifice their lives
for the men coming across the beach.
I knew very well
that those men would not let me down.
The men of the King's
Shropshire Light Infantry
were engaged in bitter fighting
at Lebiey Ridge for 30 days.
The Allies finally succeeded in
liberating the city of Caen on July 19th.
Those of us survived are pretty selfish.
It's a dirty, filthy game, war.
You miss your colleagues.
There's no question about that.
Yeah, it is sad. It is sad.
As the days went on,
we thought to ourselves,

a few days ago, you were just lads.
You hadn't been out of school very long.
And now you've become a man when
you've gone through all this nightmare.
It is a nightmare, of course.
Absolute nightmare.
18-year-old Franz Gockel was
one of only two men in his platoon
who survived the fighting
on Omaha Beach.
I've told people
I was praying a lot during the attack.
And one of the Americans
I'm now friends with today said,
We were also praying.
We were praying
and killing each other at the same time.
Robert Capa's photographs were published
in "Life" magazine on June 19th, 1944.
He had already returned
to the beaches of Normandy.
He was killed by a landmine ten years
later whilst on assignment in Vietnam.
The red cross made by Andr Heintz
outside the city hospital of Caen
was spotted by Allied aircraft.
The hospital and the cathedral
were the only two large buildings
that escaped destruction.
they came across a cellar
where they found a man
who had died of suffocation
because he had been trapped there
and nobody had ever realized
that he was there.
And with a candle
he had managed to write a few notes,
and the last thing he had written was,
It's terrible to know
that I am going to die
because I have been expecting
the liberation for so long,
but since I know that because of my death
other people will be liberated...

And he ended,

"Long live France! Long live the Allies!"

Boris J.