

# D-Day- The Normandy Landing

Airborne operations began just after midnight on June 6, 1944. At each end of the invasion area, paratroopers and glider pilots were dropped. These included the U.S. 101st and 82nd Airborne and the 6th British Airborne. The goal of these troops was to control the roads and slow the German counterattack at the beachheads.

Roughly 5,000 ships carried troops and supplies to the landing sites. The boats were protected by tethered balloons that protected them from attack by low flying planes. Only one ship, the *Svener*, a Norwegian mine sweeper, was sunk by a German patrol boat prior to landing.

The attack was launched on five beachheads code named Utah (U.S.), Omaha (U.S.), Gold, Juno, And Swor. At 8 a.m. the first assault waves landed. All the beaches, with the exception of Omaha, were taken quickly. On Omaha, the American troops were pinned down by heavy enemy fire. Omaha beach was not secured until the afternoon. Allied loses were 3,000 killed, captured, or wounded. 2,500 of these were on Omaha beach alone.

Once the beachheads were secured, the goal shifted to moving in supplies. Two deepwater harbors were built, but only one remained usable after a storm. This caused the British offensive to be delayed. By July, the Allies had broken out of Normandy and by late August they had liberated Paris.