

# Lessons Learned

a Maryland teacher's guide to D-Day

**Celebrating Maryland's Heroes**  
by sharing their contributions to  
history

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*Maryland veterans contributed greatly to the Allied Forces' triumph in World War II—an event of international significance that continues to warrant study in today's classrooms. We are pleased to provide this teacher's guide and accompanying DVD and CD-ROM, as a resource to teach about World War II, D-Day, and other related historical events.*

*One copy of this resource kit will be provided to each public high school in Maryland. Links to these materials will also be available at [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org) by clicking on the Teachers/Principals icon.*

*The teacher's guide and CD-ROM, including lesson seeds, were created by Maryland educators. The "In Their Own Words" oral history documentary about the experiences of Marylanders who participated in the D-Day Invasion was coordinated by the Maryland Department of Veteran's Affairs to preserve the first-hand stories of World War II veterans for future generations. ■*

## D-DAY LESSON "SEEDS"

The following 11 lesson "seeds" align with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) in social studies and provide suggestions on how to incorporate these resources into your lessons.

### Lesson Seed 1: History of the Blue and the Gray

Using primary sources, including "The Blue and the Gray Storms Normandy Shores" and the four pictures from Normandy, students will examine the history and background of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division—the group that led the assault on Omaha Beach. The article will provide students with a timeline on the development of this Maryland and Virginia unit dating back to World War I. The 29<sup>th</sup> Division was mobilized in February of 1941 and began training for its involvement in the invasion of France. Look at the following as it relates to the 29<sup>th</sup>:

- Impact that the Depression had on enlistment and recruitment of men into the National Guard
- Impact on individuals when a National Guard unit is called to active duty
- Intense training received by the 29<sup>th</sup> while in England
- Roles filled by individuals in the 29<sup>th</sup>, including engineers, artillery, infantry, and support troops
- History of the "Blue/Gray" patch of the 29<sup>th</sup> symbolizing the unity between North and South
- Experiences of the 29<sup>th</sup> at Normandy as chronicled in "Garcia"

### Lesson Seed 2: Perspective of the Engineers—Before and After

Divide the class into two groups. One group will read documents written before the invasion while the other group reads documents written after the invasion. Have students pair with a partner (one before/one after) and share their perspectives. Have students individually make a list of five words describing D-Day and compare them to their partner's words.

Students can create a before and after chart to describe their perception of the invasion before D-Day and then in the aftermath. Students can identify the apprehension, courage and optimism before and respond to the reality of what they had witnessed. How did the author's perception change? How did he react to seeing the products of war?

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# Areas of Study: Operation Overlord

## DIPLOMACY

- FDR and Churchill 1942
- Operation Torch
- Relationship between Eisenhower, Churchill, FDR and DeGaulle
- Soviet influence

## THE PLANNING

- Eisenhower Leads
- Patton passed over
- Montgomery and British reaction
- Interaction between Americans and British High Command

## THE BUILD-UP OF MEN

- The number of American, Canadian, and Polish Troops in England (over 3 million)
- The interaction between American men and the British people
- The interaction between American men and British soldiers
- The make-up of the American Force
  - Small towns/big city/cross section of America
  - National Guard units/regular Army
  - 29<sup>th</sup> Division (Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania) National Guard units and 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry
  - Airborne units
  - American 82<sup>nd</sup>
  - British 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne
- The Deception
  - Double agents convinced Germans Normandy was diversionary invasion site.
  - Agent, code named "Garbo," most trusted double agent
  - "BIGOT" is code word for the top security clearance used for the invasion.
  - Fake army placed at Dover, where Germans think the invasion will come
  - Patton is in charge of this "army", and is called "FUSAG."
  - Rubber trucks and tanks used to deceive Germans; believe that because Patton is there the Allies will attack at Calais
  - French resistance forces pass on information to the Allies.
  - Invasion delayed one day due to storm in the Channel; Allies launch campaign on the 6<sup>th</sup> rather than waiting two weeks for right moon and tidal conditions
- The Air Drop
  - Two American and one British Airborne units are to drop on the night of the invasion to stop German reinforcements from getting to the beach
  - British use plywood gliders to get into Normandy countryside to secure a bridge nicknamed "Pegasus Bridge". This was the first battle of D-Day.
  - Over Cherbourg, American troops from 101<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> jumped into large cloudbank and a hail of German fire. They were scattered over the countryside and did not land in the area that had been planned.
  - Small metal "crickets" were used to communicate in the dark night.
  - The American drop was a success despite the aforementioned problems.
- The Beach Landing
  - The 116<sup>th</sup> and part of the 29<sup>th</sup> were the first to land. Took almost 100% casualties as a result of the German MG-42 machine gun barrage
  - Five beaches code named Utah, Omaha, Sword, Juno, and Gold (2 American, 2 British, 1 Canadian)
  - Almost 2000 Americans died at the beach nicknamed "Bloody Omaha."
  - The Higgins Boat, or LCVP, made the beach landing possible. This invention was developed by Andrew Higgins, a New Orleans industrialist.
  - Due to heavy casualties, General Omar Bradley planned to withdraw all troops at 8 a.m. but later decided against that action.
  - Plan was to continually move without stopping to assist the wounded.
  - Maze of beach obstacles and mines set by the Germans made invasion (over 3 million mines, miles of barbed wire, steel and other obstacles intended to damage the landing craft)
  - Eventually the Allied forces breached Hitler's Atlantic Wall, which was commanded by German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel
- The Rangers at Pointe du Hoc
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Ranger Battalions assigned to scale the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc, a point between Utah and Omaha Beaches
  - Troops landed in small rafts and fired rocket propelled ladders to the top of the cliff
  - Germans at the top cut ropes, dropped grenades and fired at them
  - Only 90 Rangers (out of 220) survived the climb to the top
  - Upon reaching the top, the Rangers found only telephone poles implanted in the ground to look like guns. The guns had been moved.
  - Two Rangers found 155 Howitzers, disabled weapons, and saved thousands of lives
- Hedgerows
  - Inland were deadly hedgerows throughout the Normandy countryside
  - High casualties were incurred
  - St. Lo was the first town taken by the 29<sup>th</sup> Division on D-Day
- Today
  - French built cemeteries in the Normandy countryside to remember American sacrifice
  - The largest cemetery sits just above Omaha Beach
  - Over 9,300 men are buried there

## LESSON SEEDS. Continued

### Lesson Seed 3: French Gratitude and Perspective

Look at the message written to the 115<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. What are some of the words that can be easily translated into English that tell the story not only of the heroism of D-Day but also describe the gratitude of the French? Write the words on the board and have students create an essay using the four John Dorsey photos on the CD-ROM.

### Lesson Seed 4: Introduction to D-Day

Students will examine the varying perspectives on an invasion of France, which led to the plan for Operation Overlord. In 1942 Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, and DeGaulle had different opinions on when this invasion would occur. An invasion of North Africa occurred in 1942, followed by an Allied invasion of Italy in 1943. Once students grasp the reasons for Overlord, which include, taking pressure off the Soviet Army, starting a march toward Germany, and freeing France from the Germans, they will understand how the following relationships and interactions contributed to defining the leadership roles within the Allied forces:

- Patton's (U.S.) desire to command the invasion
- Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery's (U.K.) desire to be in charge
- Appointment of Eisenhower (U.S.) as the commander of the invasion

### Lesson Seed 5: A Different Perspective on the Invasion of Normandy (Script)

Students will create an oral interpretation of "How D-Day Was Remembered," using sound effects and background, as needed. Students can compare and contrast the interpretation of the events with the more realistic accounts of the invasion. An important aspect to this lesson is to provide perspective for the writing of the play. It was written in the days after the end of WWII and was not meant to glorify the battle but rather to highlight the accomplishments of the men of Normandy.

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## LESSON SEEDS, Continued from Page 2

### Lesson Seed 5, Continued

#### Historical Background on African-Americans at Normandy

- About 100,000 African-American troops were stationed in England prior to the invasion
- Most of these men worked as truck drivers and support personnel
- According to many accounts, the British treated them well, while White American soldiers treated the African-American troops similarly to how they were treated in the segregated South, reflecting the attitude of the times in the United States
- Teachers may also want to cite the fighting record of other African-American units, such as the Tuskegee Airmen who flew bomber escorts, and never lost a single bomber that they escorted. Additionally, they attempted to instill fear and respect in the German pilots by painting the tails of their planes red, to make themselves known as an effective fighting force.

#### Historical Background: Women in World War II

- The number of women in the military increased from 1,400 to 350,000 during the war
- Women working in civilian jobs increased from 230,000 to 1.7 million with many working in defense-related industries, such as Higgins Industries—the maker of the landing craft for D-Day ([www.higginsboat.org](http://www.higginsboat.org))
- Women also worked as ferrying bombers to the east coast, combat nurses, and clerics.

- Other sources can be used to compare this account of the invasion to a more realistic account, such as “Overlord Accounts” at [www.dday.org](http://www.dday.org).
- A teacher could read aloud from passages of Stephan Ambrose’s book *D-Day: The Climactic Battle of World War II*. The recommended chapter is chapter 17 (The 116<sup>th</sup> Regiment at Omaha Beach).
- Many veterans provide personal accounts of the invasion, which would be appropriate for this activity, in both the “In Their Own Words” and “Turning Point at Normandy: A Soldier’s Story” documentaries.
- The documents *Garcia*, *Official* and *Pogue*—all in the primary source collection—provide excellent accounts from the 116<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.

### Lesson Seed 6: African-Americans at Normandy

Students will examine photographs of African Americans arriving shortly after D-Day and their efforts in this campaign. These photos can be accessed at [www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar](http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar). Students will then answer these questions:

- What are the African-Americans doing?
- Is their role reflective of how African-Americans were treated in the 1940’s. Why or why not?

Use the account of Sgt. Edward Farley, an African-American soldier who participated in Operation Overlord. Students can understand the role of African-Americans in the military and the adverse conditions in which they served. The article can be found at [www.dday.org](http://www.dday.org) by pulling down the “About D-Day” menu, and referring to the “Overlord Profiles.” Students should be made aware of the fact that African-Americans were motivated to serve their country despite living in a segregated nation, and they performed their jobs with amazing efficiency. This also forms the basis of a good Character Education lesson about overcoming adversity.

### Lesson Seed 7: Women in D-Day

Students can search for photographs of women arriving shortly after D-Day at [www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar](http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar). In this lesson students will understand the roles played by women in preparation for the invasion, including:

- Service in WAC. ( Log onto [www.dday.org](http://www.dday.org), pull down “About D-Day” menu, and click on “Overlord Profiles” for information on WAC Helen Denton. )
- Working in industries at home
- Sending letters and packages as a show of support to husbands and sons serving abroad.

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# A D-Day Resource List

<i>The Biggest Brother</i>	Book	Alexander
<i>Band of Brothers</i>	Book	Alexander
<i>Citizen Soldier</i>	Book	Alexander
<i>D-Day: the Climactic Battle of World War II</i>	Book	Alexander
<i>Pegasus Bridge</i>	Book	Alexander
<i>The Victors</i>	Book	Alexander
<i>Remember D-Day</i>	Book	Drez
<i>Voices of D-Day</i>	Book	Drez
<i>The Bedford Boys</i>	Book	Kershaw
<i>World War II for Kids</i>	Book	Panchyk
<i>A Day that Changed America: D-Day</i>	Book	Tanaka
"In Their Own Words"	Video	Md. Dept. of Veterans Affairs
"Turning Point at Normandy: A Soldier's Story"	Video	ABC News

[www.ddaymuseum.org](http://www.ddaymuseum.org) Web  
[www.dday.org](http://www.dday.org) Web

**NOTE: There are many books on the invasion of Normandy. Please consult the library, bookstores or the Internet for additional resources.■**

## Lesson Seed 8: Personal Quotes

Students should actively read the article from the *Baltimore Sun*, highlighting or making notes, on the following issues:

- events that would impact the emotions of a young soldier in the infantry during the invasion
- impact of the various parts of this man's trip back to Normandy
- Relevance to today's generation

Students should summarize the article while in groups. As a class, share the summaries and make connections to other wars, particularly, contemporary military actions.

## Lesson Seed 9: Impact of D-Day

Students will examine a photo of destruction from D-Day. Then they will examine documents, which describe the impact of D-Day.

These documents are included in the CD-ROM under *After Action*. Use the documents on the impact on wives, parents, siblings who lost family members, on the assessment of human lives lost, and on the assessment of physical destruction.

## Allied Casualty figures for Normandy Campaign

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
American	29,000	106,000
United Kingdom	11,000	54,000
Canada	5,000	13,000
France	12,200	
	(killed or missing)	
Germany	30,000	80,000
	210,000 (missing)	

These casualty figures are from Britannica, but are disputed by many including noted historians and several governments. The figures vary greatly depending on the source of the information.

## Lesson Seed 10: Impact on the Home Front

President Roosevelt addressed the nation about the Normandy Invasion. Have students access these addresses at <http://millercenter.virginia.edu> in the Miller Center-Scripps Library and Multimedia Archive. Click on Franklin D. Roosevelt speeches, then access Fireside chats 29 and 30.

Have students read and analyze this address to understand the direct connection between the military efforts and the support of the citizens at home. The reading will show how FDR tried to caution the nation that the war would still be a long struggle and that many men would lose their lives.

## Lesson Seed 11: The Plan for D-Day

Generals Eisenhower, Montgomery, and Bradley, and their subordinates, knew this invasion was risky, and that many casualties were possible. Have students examine the following aspects of Operation Overlord:

- **The Deception**—the Allies used a litany of spies to deceive the Germans into thinking that the invasion would take place at a location to the north of Normandy. A fictitious army located at the city of Dover, which was directly across the Channel from Calais where the Germans were expecting the invasion, enhanced this idea. The spies had effectively convinced the Germans that Normandy was just a diversion.
- **French Resistance**—These French citizens were instrumental in sabotaging railroads and bridges prior to the invasion
- **Airborne Assault**—Two American Airborne Units (82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup>) were to drop into France, behind the German lines. This was done in order to prevent German reinforcements from getting to the beaches. Prior to the operations, it was estimated that 70% of these men were going to die. Despite the fact that men were scattered all over the countryside, the Airborne drop was considered a success. In addition, the British were part of this aspect of the assault, using plywood gliders to land in Normandy with a minimum amount of noise
- **Beach Assault**—Using the newly crafted Higgins Boats (Landing Craft), American Units hit Omaha Beach at 6:31 a.m. (local time). There were five beaches code named; Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold. The first Americans to land were from the Maryland/Virginia based 29<sup>th</sup> Division. The first unit, the 116<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, suffered 97% casualties. Many of these men were killed before reaching shore.
- **Rangers**—Some of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Ranger Battalions scaled the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc to disable the 155mm Howitzers that were reported to be above Utah Beach. After scaling the cliffs without safety harnesses, they discovered the guns had been moved. Two Rangers, SSgt's. Leonard Lomell and Jack Kuhn, moved inland, and found and destroyed the guns before 9:00 a.m.
- **Moving Inland**—After facing the bloody combat of the beach assault the soldiers moved inland facing more difficulties. The Normandy countryside was riddled with large hedgerows that had been built by farmers to contain their cattle. These large earthen walls provided cover for the Germans. Frequently it would take an entire day to overtake one hedgerow, at the cost of many Allied lives.

See *Lecture* document and *Neptune* documents on CD to support this lesson.