



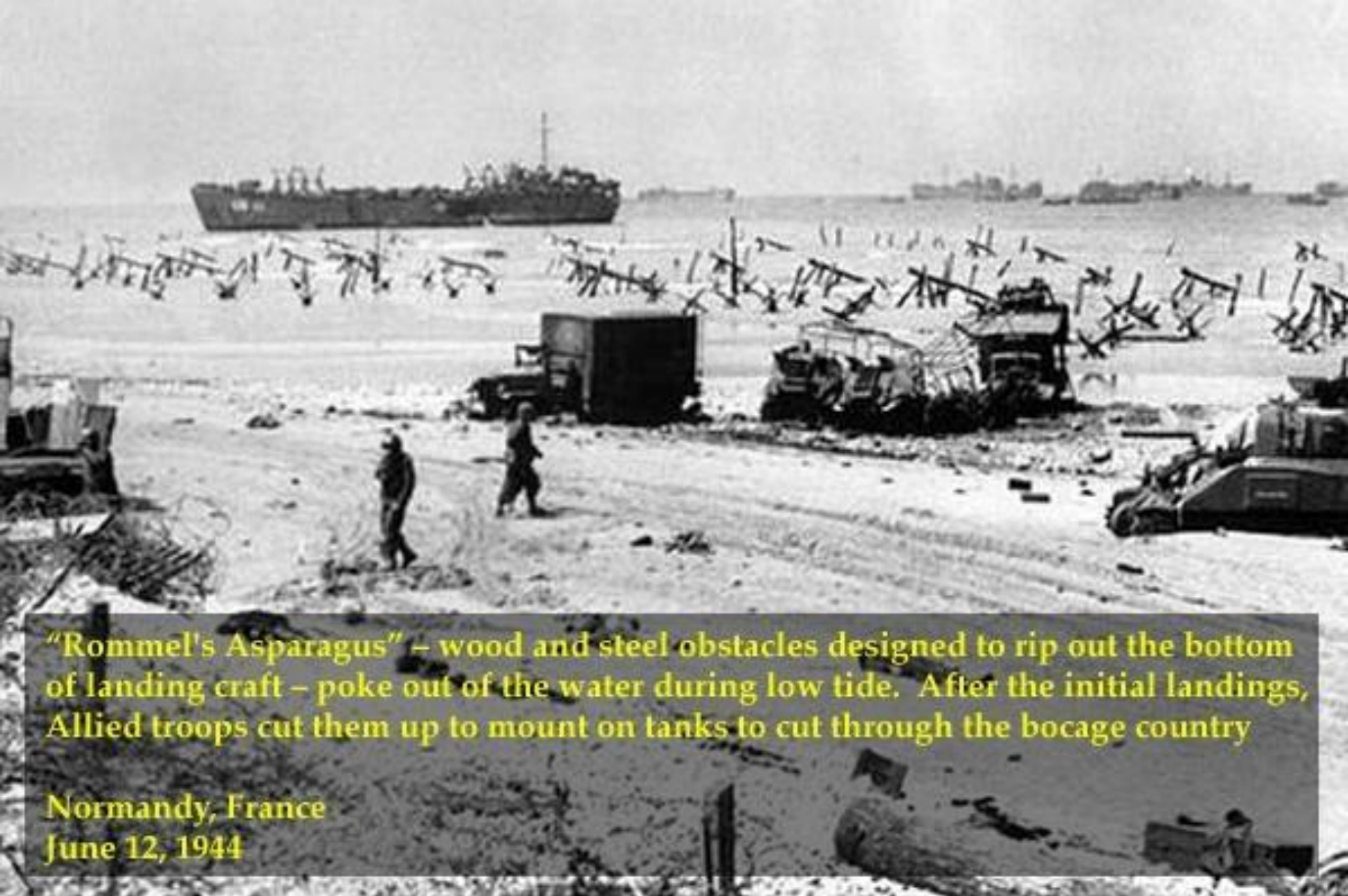


The plan for the landing on Omaha Beach fell apart almost instantly. Units landed in the wrong place, or without heavy equipment.

The US Army structure allowed junior officers and sergeants to make on-the-spot changes, and they took the initiative to move off the beach and get inland.

US Army General Omar Bradley could only watch and wait on his command ship nearby while his men fought and died onshore.

Normandy, France
June 6, 1944



"Rommel's Asparagus" – wood and steel obstacles designed to rip out the bottom of landing craft – poke out of the water during low tide. After the initial landings, Allied troops cut them up to mount on tanks to cut through the bocage country

Normandy, France
June 12, 1944

US Army General Dwight D. Eisenhower's D-Day message to the troops.

This was distributed in the millions
to all the Allied Armies.

June 5, 1944

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



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. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.



Dwight D. Eisenhower




"Night of Nights" by Gil Cohen. © 2010 by Valor Studios. All rights reserved.

June 6, 1944, above occupied France . . . With steely eyes, the Band of Brothers paratroopers of the 101st Airborne lunge toward their rendezvous with destiny. Many carry a letter from Gen. Eisenhower that they keep tucked under helmets, in jump boots, and in bulging jacket pockets, close to heart. It read: "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." At the door of each C-47, with chaos a step away, the troopers knew: "Tonight is the Night of Nights."





A black and white historical photograph showing the D-Day landings at Utah Beach, Normandy, France. The view is from a landing craft, looking out over the ocean. In the foreground, the bow of the landing craft is visible on the left, and a soldier in a helmet and uniform is seen on the right, looking towards the beach. The water is choppy with small waves. In the middle ground, several groups of soldiers are wading across the water, some carrying equipment. Further out, a large artificial island or structure is visible, with more soldiers and equipment on it. The background shows a distant shoreline with buildings and trees under a sky filled with large, dramatic clouds. Two blimps are visible in the sky, one near the top left and another further back in the center.

Utah Beach
Normandy, France
June 6, 1944

From guns in pillboxes and the heights above the beaches, the Germans could intersect their fields of fire along presighted targets. One machine gunner fired 12,000 rounds on the invaders of Omaha Beach

Normandy, France
1944





From: Leo Daugherty, *The Battle of the Hedgerows*
(Hinckley, UK: Ian Allen, 2001).



The Army Medal of Honor

Awarded by the President
in the name of Congress

Army Medal of Honor: A gold five pointed star, each point tipped with trefoils, 1½ inches wide, surrounded by a green laurel wreath and suspended from a gold bar inscribed "VALOR," surmounted by an eagle. In the center of the star, Minerva's¹ head surrounded by the words "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA." On each ray of the star is a green oak leaf. On the reverse is a bar engraved "THE CONGRESS TO" with a space for engraving the name of the recipient. The medal is suspended by a neck ribbon, 1¾ inches wide in "bluebird" blue. A shield of the same color ribbon with thirteen white stars, arranged in the form of three chevrons is above the medal. The service ribbon is 1¾ inches wide with five white stars in the form of a "M."

¹Virgil presents her as the goddess of war.