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D-Day National Remembrance

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On Tuesday, June 6, 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower made a dramatic announcement from London:

"People of Western Europe: A landing was made this morning on the coast of France by troops of the Allied Expeditionary Force . . . The hour of your liberation is approaching."

Operation Overlord, the invasion of Adolf Hitler's "Fortress Europe" forty years ago, thrust approximately 130,000 American and Allied troops under General Eisenhower's command onto beaches now known to history as Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword along the coast of Normandy, France. Another 23,000 British and American airborne forces were parachuted or taken by glider to secure critical inland areas. Some 11,000 sorties were flown by allied aircraft, and innumerable sabotage operations were carried out by Resistance forces behind the lines.

On that day and in the ensuing weeks, the soldiers, sailors, and airmen of the assault forces, and the men and women who supported the landing, displayed great skill, unwavering tenacity, and courage. The Americans who landed at Omaha Beach—where sharp bluffs, strong defenses, and the presence of a powerful German division produced enormous difficulties—wrote an especially brave and noble chapter in the military history of the United States.

Opposed by bitter enemy resistance, the landing forces gained the beaches at great sacrifice, pushed inland, and expanded their beachheads. Feats of leadership and courage by individuals and small groups turned the tide. The great battles of 1944 that followed, from the hedgerows to the Ardennes, hold a place of highest honor in the tradition of the United States Armed Forces. The brave, often heroic deeds of our fellow Americans and others in the Allied Armed Forces set in motion the liberation of Europe and brought unity and pride to all free people.

Welded by the experiences of war, the old world and the new formed an enduring alliance which shared the rebuilding of Europe and forged a shield that has kept the peace in Europe for almost forty years. A common dedication to remain strong can continue that peace which these brave men and women fought so hard to secure.

In recognition of the fortieth anniversary of this historic event, the Congress, by H.J. Res. 487, has designated June 6, 1984, as "D-day National Remembrance" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 6, 1984, as D-day National Remembrance, a national day commemorating the fortieth anniversary of D-day. I call upon the people of the United States to commemorate the valor of those who served in the D-day assault forces with appropriate ceremonies and observances.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 31st day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan