

Normandy Campaign, Phase 1 Timeline

6 Mar 1944	The RAF Bomber Command began a major offensive over France to prepare for the Normandy invasion.
12 Mar 1944	All travel between Great Britain and neutral Ireland were banned to prevent details of the invasion of France being leaked to the enemy.
17 Apr 1944	British Royal Navy and Royal Air Force Bomber Command commenced minelaying in the approaches of the English Channel in preparation for the forthcoming invasion of Europe.
2 May 1944	54-year-old Leonard Dawe, a teacher, compiled a cross-puzzle which was published in the Daily Telegraph on this date. He was put under MI5 investigation as the crossword puzzle contained the code names of the American landing beaches in Normandy, France.
8 May 1944	Eisenhower set the date for the cross-Channel invasion at 5 Jun 1944.
9 May 1944	The Allies began an aerial campaign against airfields and rail lines in France in preparation for the cross-Channel invasion.
20 May 1944	Eisenhower addressed French Resistance groups via a broadcast in preparation for the planned cross-Channel invasion. On the same day, 5,000 Allied bombers conducted coordinated strikes against many rail targets and 9 airfields in France and Belgium.
22 May 1944	In a Daily Telegraph crossword puzzle the word "Omaha" appeared as one of the answers. This caused considerable consternation among Allied invasion planners as "Omaha" was the codename for the French beach due to be assaulted by the US 1st Division on D-Day.
23 May 1944	General Hans Cramer, last commander of the German Afrika Korps, was repatriated due to ill health; before he departed Britain, he was shown evidence of the massive Allied build-up, but was misinformed as to the location of these forces; when he was later debriefed in Berlin, Germany, this misinformation helped deceive the Germans as to the actual target of the invasion. On the same day Cramer was repatriated, a single USAAF B-24 bomber ("Lorelei" 41-29300), escorted by eight P-51 fighters, loaded with the new top-secret Azon bombs successfully destroyed four bridges leading into Normandie, France; Lieutenant Colonel F. M. O'Neil (commanding officer of 753rd Squadron) and Captain Fred DeNeffe were the mission pilots; the entire crew was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.
24 May 1944	British Prime Minister Churchill formally announced that Spain would not be a target of the forthcoming Allied invasion on continental western Europe.
27 May 1944	In a Daily Telegraph crossword puzzle the word "Overlord" appeared as one of the answers. This caused considerable consternation among Allied invasion planners as "Overlord" was the codename for the whole D-Day operation.
30 May 1944	In a Daily Telegraph crossword puzzle the word "Mulberry" appeared as one of the answers. This caused considerable consternation among Allied invasion planners as "Mulberry" was the codename for the floating harbours and facilities to be used during the invasion landings in France.
1 Jun 1944	In a Daily Telegraph crossword puzzle the solution to 15 Down was "Neptune", the codename for the D-Day naval assault.
2 Jun 1944	Two midget submarines (X-20 and X-23) set off from England, United Kingdom to sail submerged across the English Channel to the French Normandy coast where they would position themselves ready to guide the invasion fleet with coloured lights as navigation beacons.
2 Jun 1944	Typhoon fighter-bombers of No. 98 and No. 609 Squadrons RAF attacked and destroyed the enemy radar station at Dieppe/Caucocotein France as an important prelude to the Normandy Invasion; this installation would have given the Germans advance warning of the Allied invasion fleet.
3 Jun 1944	RAF aircraft conducted raids in the Pas-de-Calais and Cherbourg areas of France.
4 Jun 1944	Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy, France, was postponed due to weather. Meanwhile, RAF bombers struck German coastal fortifications along the French coast.
5 Jun 1944	Erwin Rommel noted to Gerd von Rundstedt that there was no sign of an Allied invasion on the French coast.
5 Jun 1944	USS Ancon departed England, United Kingdom for waters off Baie de la Seine, France.
6 Jun 1944	130,000 to 150,000 Allied troops, roughly half American and half British and Commonwealth, invaded the beaches of Normandy, France; it was the largest amphibious operation.
6 Jun 1944	British Company Sergeant-Major Stanley Hollis, using a PIAT launcher, took down several German pillboxes and a field gun during the Normandy invasion in France and was credited for saving the lives of many men. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, the only awarded for actions on the initial day of the invasion.

6 Jun 1944	Norwegian destroyer Stord shelled the town of Ouistreham in Normandy, France prior to the landing of British troops on Sword Beach.
6 Jun 1944	The first general officer killed on either side of the battle in Normandie, France was Brigadier General Don F. Pratt, the assistant divisional commander of the US 101st Airborne Division who was crushed to death when the Waco glider in which he was travelling crashed into a hedgerow whilst landing in France. He was also the highest ranking Allied officer to be killed on 6 June 1944.
7 Jun 1944	British troops captured Bayeux, France.
9 Jun 1944	US troops captured St. Mére-Eglise, France, cutting major road and rail links to the Cherbourg Peninsula.
10 Jun 1944	RAF Lancaster and Halifax bombers attacked four airfields in France. At Leval, where German fighter-bombers were operating in attacks on the invasion beaches, the runway was cratered in several places, interrupting sorties for 48 hours.
11 Jun 1944	Richard O'Connor and his British VIII Corps arrived at Normandie, France.
12 Jun 1944	US and British forces linked up near Carentan, France, forming a solid 50-mile battle line, with 326,000 men and 54,000 vehicles on the beachhead.
13 Jun 1944	German troops launched a counter attack on Carentan, France. Meanwhile, near Villers-Bocage, Hauptsturmführer Michael Wittmann's lone Tiger tank destroyed 25 tanks and vehicles of the British 7th Armoured Division.
14 Jun 1944	American troops captured Carentan, France.
15 Jun 1944	RAF bombers struck Boulogne and Le Havre, France. Meanwhile, US VIII Corps (Major General Troy Middleton) became operational with the 90th Infantry Division and both US Airborne Divisions under its command, and was tasked with protecting the rear of the imminent attack to capture Cherbourg.
16 Jun 1944	In France, the Mulberry harbour off Omaha beach, completed the night before, received its first tank landing ship (LST). Although there were still doubts that the pontoons would not be able to take the weight of a 38-ton Sherman tank without sinking or collapsing this task would, thankfully, be achieved with just a small margin of safety.
17 Jun 1944	Adolf Hitler met with Erwin Rommel and Hans Speidel in France; Hitler agreed to visit the front lines in France, but ultimately this would not take place.
17 Jun 1944	Omar Bradley's American troops succeeded in reaching the sea on the western shore of the Cotentin Peninsula at Barneville, slicing the peninsula completely across and cutting off France's major naval base and arsenal at Cherbourg from the German army to the south.
18 Jun 1944	US First Army isolated Cherbourg, France.
19 Jun 1944	The US Mulberry Harbor at Omaha Beach off Normandy, France was wrecked by a storm. By this date, however, the Allies had 20 divisions ashore in France, while the Germans fielded only 16 in the region.
20 Jun 1944	The Americans launched their first attack on Cherbourg, France.
22 Jun 1944	The Americans launched a major attack on Cherbourg, France. Allied aircraft dropped over 1,000 tons of bombs on the city during the attack.
25 Jun 1944	Operation Epsom began with British Second Army's offensive near Caen, France. To the west, with naval gunfire support, American ground forces engaged in street fighting in Cherbourg.
26 Jun 1944	General von Schlieben, commander of the German garrison in Cherbourg, France, was captured by US troops.
27 Jun 1944	In France, US troops captured Cherbourg while British forces took Hill 112 near Caen. Elsewhere in France, the British 3rd Infantry Division and tanks launched Operation Mitten to seize two German occupied chateaus, la Londe and la Landel; the evening assault was repulsed.
27 Jun 1944	USS Ancon departed French waters.
28 Jun 1944	In the morning, British 3rd Infantry Division and tanks captured two German occupied chateaus, la Londe and la Landel, in France during Operation Mitten; the operation cost at least three British tanks and 268 men; historian Terry Copp had described the fighting for these chateaus as the "bloodiest square mile in Normandy". On the same day, German defenses halted Operation Epsom near Caen, France.
29 Jun 1944	The last harbor fort at Cherbourg, France was captured by US troops. Meanwhile, a planned German offensive by the 2nd and 9th Panzer Divisions at Villers-Bocage, west of Caen, was abandoned when their armored columns were blasted by 260 RAF heavy bombers.
30 Jun 1944	The final 6,000 German troops in Cherbourg, France surrendered. At Caen, German troops recaptured Hill 112.
3 Jul 1944	US VIII Corps advanced toward Coutances, France.

- 6 Jul 1944 Baron Hiroshi Oshima, the Japanese ambassador to Berlin, unaware that his reports were being read by the cryptanalysts in Bletchley Park in Britain, told Tokyo that the German high command was still awaiting for George Patton's army group to land in the Pas de Calais, France. A month after D-Day the "Fortitude" deception plan was still misleading the German generals.
- 7 Jul 1944 American attacks near Carentan, France were held off by German counterattacks. In support of ground troops and to prepare for a new offensive to be launched on the next day, RAF bombers dropped 2,300 tons of explosives on the Germans in and around Caen, France.
- 8 Jul 1944 British Second Army launched Operation Charnwood against Caen, France.
- 9 Jul 1944 British and Canadian forces entered the rubble that was Caen, France. Meanwhile, US XIX Corps began advancing toward Saint-Lô, France.
- 11 Jul 1944 US VII Corps met resistance attacking toward Saint-Lô, France.
- 12 Jul 1944 US VII Corps made limited progress toward Saint-Lô, France.
- 14 Jul 1944 The US Eighth Air Force based in Britain flew several missions over France, with 319 B-17 bombers dropping 3,700 containers to supply Allied forces fighting in southern France, 131 B-24 bombers attacking Montdidier and Peronne airfields, and 94 P-38 fighter-bombers attacking targets near Paris (1 P-38 aircraft lost). Meanwhile, other Allied aircraft attacked targets in the French railway system in or near Bourth, Merrey, Periers, Chateaudun, and other locations; some of these attacks were conducted using Oboe, a British aerial blind bombing targeting technology.
- 15 Jul 1944 The US Eighth Air Force based in Britain launched two missions over France, with 169 P-38 Lightning and P-47 Thunderbolt fighter-bombers attacking German transportation southeast of Paris (3 aircraft lost) and 6 B-17 Flying Fortress bombers dropping propaganda leaflets over French cities after sundown. Four B-26 Marauder bombers of the US Ninth Air Force hit the L'Aigle rail bridge in the afternoon, while fighters also of the Ninth Air Force attacked various targets at Saint-Lô, Argentan, and Falaise.
- 16 Jul 1944 During the day, about 375 USAAF Ninth Air Force aircraft attacked German positions in the Saint-Lô and Rennes areas in France throughout the day. After dark, 5 B-17 bombers were launched to drop propaganda leaflets over France and another group of 24 B-17 bombers flew in support of French resistance groups.
- 17 Jul 1944 In the morning, 670 B-17 and B-24 bombers of the US Eighth Air Force, escorted by 433 fighters, attacked targets in France (1 B-17 bomber and 1 P-47 fighter were lost); in diversion, B-26B bombers of the US VIII Air Support Command attacked Cayeux, France to draw away German fighters. At Coutances, napalm was used for the first time. On the ground, American troops entered Saint-Lô. In the evening, 34 B-17 and 106 B-24 bombers, escorted by 209 P-51 fighters, attacked 12 German V-weapon launching sites in the Pas de Calais, France area. After sundown, 5 B-17 bombers dropped propagandan leaflets in France and the Netherlands while 16 B-24 bombers flew in support of French resistance activities.
- 18 Jul 1944 US XIX Corps troops entered Saint-Lô, France. British troops launched Operation Goodwood against Caen with Allied 2,200 aircraft supporting the ground assault, but stubborn German defense cost the British VIII Corps 200 tanks and 1,500 men, while just over 100 Panzers were destroyed. After sundown, 25 American B-24 bombers flew in support of resistance activities.
- 19 Jul 1944 In France, Canadian troops cleared Caen's southern suburbs, capturing Vaucelles, Louvigny, and Flery-sur-Orne, while British 11th Armoured Division captured Bras and Hubert-Follie. In the afternoon, 262 US 9th Air Force B-26 Marauder and A-20 Havoc aircraft attacked bridges on the Loire River and Seine River and a fuel dump at Bruz, France.
- 20 Jul 1944 The British Operation Goodwood in France was stalled by heavy weather; thus far, over 400 tanks were lost.