



# D-Day: Axis Powers.



**D**-Day became the turning point for the Allies. The Axis powers that day did not include the Japanese or the Italians – only the Germans.

More than 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded or went missing during the Battle of Normandy. And while the total German casualties on D-Day are not known, they are estimated as being between 4,000 and 9,000.

One of the most profound facts about the Germans and D-Day was their late start in committing to the fight.

When Allied forces landed, Hitler was asleep. None of his generals dared order re-enforcements without his permission, yet no one dared wake him. Crucial hours (probably 3-4) were lost in the battle to hold on to Normandy. And it has been reported that even when Hitler was awakened, he didn't believe the invasion was significant because he expected it to happen in Calais, France, instead.

Additionally, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, Commander of Army Group B, was in charge of defending northern France from the Allied invasion. However, he was nearly a thousand miles from Normandy on D-Day, celebrating his wife's 50th birthday in their home in Herrlingen, Germany.

## *German military leadership*

### **General Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, Commander of Panzer Group West.**



Geyr commanded the main force of German tanks in northern France. Rommel, because of its capability, wanted his group near the shore to prevent invasion at the start, but Geyr and Runstedt disagreed, believing the tanks would be more effective inland.

Geyr successfully rushed three divisions to Caen after the Normandy invasion, but his own headquarters near Paris was attacked on June 9, killing many of his staff and wounding Geyr, preventing a significant planned attack on the British and Canadians and reclaim of lost ground.

He was relieved of duty by July 2nd.



### **Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, Commander of Army Group B.**



Probably best known of the German military leaders, Rommel reportedly showed surprising compassion at times. On D-Day, he led the troops responsible for defending northern France.

However, he is also known for ignoring orders at times to kill Jewish soldiers, civilians and captured commandos, and late in the war, his name was linked to a conspiracy to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

### **Generaloberst Friedrich Dollmann, Commander of 7th Army.**



Dollmann has the dubious honor of reducing threat levels in early June because of the extreme weather conditions.

He and others had expected an Allied invasion at this time, but the weather seemed too unruly for an assault, apparently.

His cause of death at the end of June is unknown, but many believe it either a heart attack or suicide due to learning he was to be court-martialed for the failure in Cherbourg.

### **Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, Commander in Chief in the West.**



Runstedt retired from the German military in 1938 as a "colonel general," but Adolf Hitler recalled him specifically for the war effort, initially as a commander in the Polish campaign.

He was dismissed in 1941 after the Battle of Kiev only to be recalled again in 1942 and dismissed again in July 1944 after defeat in Normandy.

## *Prisoners of war*

**T**he Allies had prisoner-of-war camps in several countries, including Australia, Canada, the USSR, India, Norway, New Zealand, Kenya, South Africa, the U.S., Great Britain, and in occupied Germany.

German troops surrendering during the Normandy Campaign started slowly, by June 9 only 4,000 prisoners. Then increasing to 15,000 by June 18, with a total of 47,000 for June. The total number of prisoners attributed to the Normandy Campaign was 200,000.

Captured Germans were sent to American POW camps at the rate of 30,000 POWs per month from D-Day until Christmas 1944. Texas, in fact, had 33 detention facilities alone.

*D-Day 70th Anniversary: Honoring the Past, Securing the Future*

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