

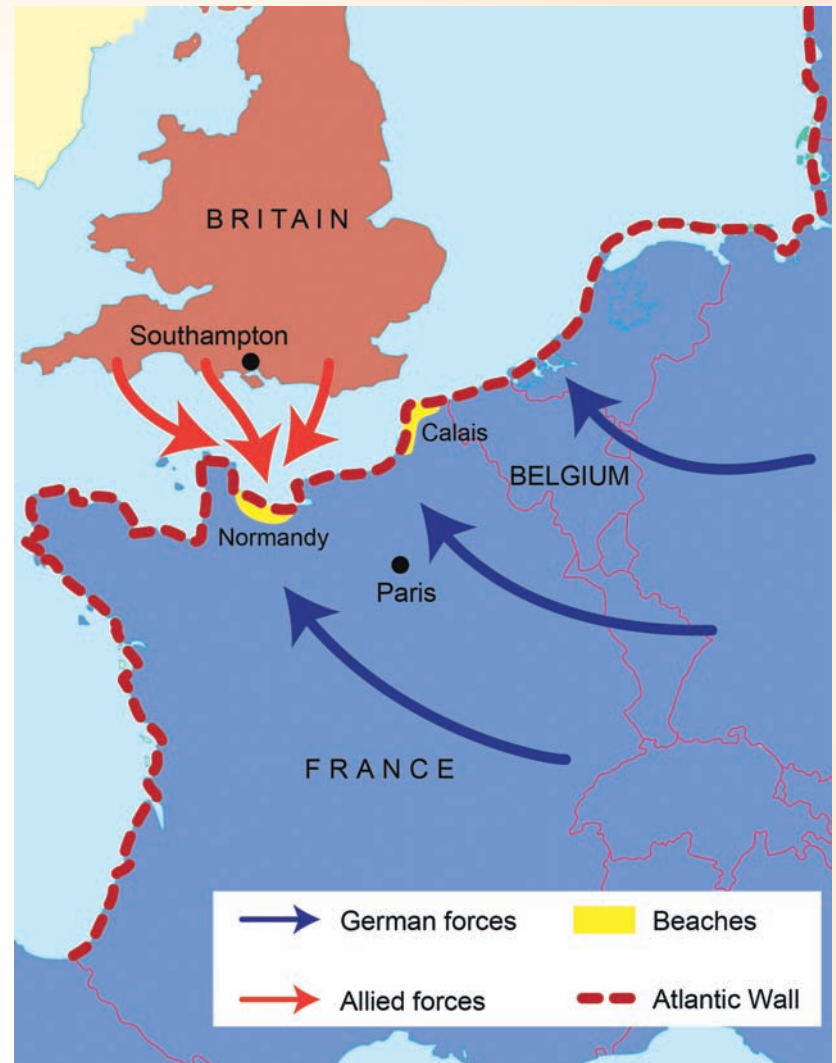
INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered what it is like to go into battle? For most of us it is hard to imagine how it must feel to get up one morning and know that you may not come back that night. Somewhere out there people are waiting to try and kill you. When you step onto enemy ground, you will be walking into the jaws of death.

That is how it was for the soldiers who crossed the English Channel on 6th June, 1944. Hitler's armies had conquered most of Europe. Germany ruled countries including France, Holland, Belgium and Poland. Now, forces from the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others were waiting to land on the beaches of Normandy in France to free Europe from Hitler. These forces were known as the Allies.

Men were about to embark on the greatest and most terrifying journey of their lives. This is the story I am about to tell. This is D-Day.

Alan Gibbons



In 1944, the German forces were in control of many parts of Europe. They were expecting their enemies to fight back, and they had built huge defences along most of the coast of western Europe. This was known as the Atlantic Wall.

WEDNESDAY 31ST MAY, 1944, 7PM

HEADING FOR THE COAST

“Do you think this is it?”

It’s Joe’s voice. I can see him staring at me in the dark. We’ve been passing convoys of trucks for hours. The roads are full of them.

Our lorry goes over a bump and throws everybody together. We all moan. We’ve been travelling for hours and we’re fed up. Helmets fall over eyes. Equipment clatters to the floor.

Behind us, the canvas slaps in the wind. It is a wet, squally night. I shove my helmet back. I remember what Joe asked before the bump and I give him my answer.

“The invasion, you mean?”

He nods. “That’s right.”

“Yes, this is it.”

