

Operation OVERLORD: Lessons From a Great Alliance

The unique alliance between America and France during World War II was key to the Ally's victory. A major turning point in World War II was Operation OVERLORD, or the battle of D-Day. The objective of this mission was to storm the beaches of Normandy, France and begin to take back France from Nazi Germany. D-Day was one of the most important dates in world history and there are many lessons we can learn from this day including the importance of teamwork, speaking up when you see bad things happening, and relying on each other's unique talents and gifts.

When Germany took over France, the country was divided into two sections. The northern section and the southern section. The northern section was occupied by Germany and strictly controlled by Nazi's while the southern section was controlled by a French government that cooperated with Germany. This was called Vichy France. The citizens of France did not want to be controlled by Germany and many of them formed a group called the Free French Forces. The Free French Forces cooperated with the Allies and contributed to the success of D-Day.¹

On June 6th, 1944, British, American, Canadian, and several other allied forces took part in the largest amphibious invasion in military history. D-day was a huge success for the Allies and was the beginning of the end of World War II. So, what did France do during this historic battle? Well, the Battle of D-Day happened in Normandy, France so the French citizens living there participated in many small ways. For example, they helped wounded allied soldiers and told the Allies where the Germans were. The Free French Forces fought alongside the Allies while the French Resistance did things like cutting German communication lines, blowing up

¹ Hughes, Thomas A. "Vichy France | History, Leaders, & Map." *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vichy-France>. Accessed 3 May 2026.

German train tracks, and giving secret reports to the Allies about German locations.² These little things were actually a big help to the Allies. Cutting German communication lines was helpful because Nazi's could not exchange plans and information. Knowing where the Germans were helped the Allies avoid dangerous encounters, and blowing up German trains stopped dangerous weapons from coming into the hands of the Nazi's.

I think one of the most important lessons we can take away from D-Day is teamwork. We can see that there were horrible things going on in the world and people recognized this and came together to fight against it. No single country could have fought the Axis Powers and won. It took everyone. Teamwork is an important lesson to learn and the world can use it today. On D-Day, British, American, and Canadian forces along with other countries came together to pull off one of the greatest invasions in world history.

When bad things happen in the world, if we all work together, we can overcome any challenges. This aspect of Operation OVERLORD affects me because I now know how important it is to work together and ask for help. An example from my own life is when my Girl Scout troop and I completed our Bronze Award. We met once a week and brainstormed ideas on how to make the world a better place. We all cared about the environment, so we wrote a book about the importance of not leaving trash behind when you are outside. When we finished, we put the book in our school's library. It was cool to see younger kids reading our book. While on a different scale, it was very fulfilling to come together with my friends and support a cause we really cared about.

Another lesson to take away from the American-French cooperation is that you have to speak up when you see injustices in the world. If people had not started to talk about what was

² Weber, Eugen. "France - Politics, Constitution, Revolution." *Britannica*, 30 April 2026, <https://www.britannica.com/place/France/The-Fourth-Republic>. Accessed 3 May 2026.

going on in Europe, Germany might have taken over and our world would be a much darker place. Events are happening all over the world and sometimes it is easy to just think about your life and not pay attention to what is going on in other parts of the world. Some people thought this during WWII. They thought that since the bad things that were happening were way far away, they did not need to be concerned. But it is important to be informed, and one way to be knowledgeable about the world is to read the news. If everyone read the news, citizens could be educated about the big headlines going on in the world and prevent disasters like WWII from repeating themselves.

Another lesson to learn from D-Day is that everyone has something to give. During D-Day everyone participated no matter how small the act. People knew what they could do and they did it. Everyday people became doctors to allied soldiers, gathered food and supplies, and did all that they could to support a cause they really cared about. This has made a difference in my own life in many ways. When my Girl Scout troop and I were writing a book for our Bronze Award, it felt like a huge task. When we broke it into sections, we quickly realized that everyone had different strengths and we could bring them together to make a book that younger kids would be able to understand and enjoy. Some of us were great at writing, while others excelled at drawing and brainstorming ideas. Just like on D-Day, everyone contributed their skills.

The United States and France came together when the U.S. were informed about what was happening on the other side of the world. They then used everyone's unique and powerful skills to complete a successful mission. The powerful alliance between the French and the Americans has taught me about valuing teamwork and looking for everyone's strengths, which are lessons that will serve me well now and in the future.

Other Sources Referenced

Atkinson, Rick, and Kate Waters. *D-Day: The Invasion of Normandy, 1944 [The Young Readers Adaptation]*. Henry Holt and Company (BYR), 2014.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *D-Day: The World War II Invasion that Changed History*. Scholastic Focus, 2018.

Miller, Terry. *D-Day: The Allies Strike Back During World War II*. Scholastic Library Publishing, 2010.