



D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II

Stephen E. Ambrose

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Stephen E. Ambrose's *D-Day* is the definitive history of World War II's most pivotal battle, a day that changed the course of history.

D-Day is the epic story of men at the most demanding moment of their lives, when the horrors, complexities, and triumphs of life are laid bare. Distinguished historian Stephen E. Ambrose portrays the faces of courage and heroism, fear and determination—what Eisenhower called “the fury of an aroused democracy”—that shaped the victory of the citizen soldiers whom Hitler had disparaged. Drawing on more than 1,400 interviews with American, British, Canadian, French, and German veterans, Ambrose reveals how the original plans for the invasion had to be abandoned, and how enlisted men and junior officers acted on their own initiative when they realized that nothing was as they were told it would be.

The action begins at midnight, June 5/6, when the first British and American airborne troops jumped into France. It ends at midnight June 6/7. Focusing on those pivotal twenty-four hours, it moves from the level of Supreme Commander to that of a French child, from General Omar Bradley to an American paratrooper, from Field Marshal Montgomery to a German sergeant.

Ambrose's *D-Day* is the finest account of one of our history's most important days.

D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II Details

Date : Published April 23rd 2013 by Simon & Schuster (first published June 6th 1994)

ISBN :

Author : Stephen E. Ambrose

Format : Kindle Edition 656 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, War, World War II, Military Fiction, Military, Military History

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From Reader Review D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II for online ebook

Abigail says

I am currently listening to this audio book while at the same time reading the paperback of Anthony Beevor's D-Day book. I don't usually do that, listen to an audio book and read a paper copy book on the same topic. But in this case I am enjoying doing it, as I am really getting a full scope picture of this fascinating time in American history.

Peter Schmeltzer says

The greatest generation.

Checkman says

Stephen Ambrose enjoyed tremendous popularity in the 1990's with his WWII books about the fighting in Northwestern Europe. The books were massive bestsellers and made him a household name. Of course a historian enjoying such popularity means that other historians and history buffs will be examining his/her's work with a fine tooth comb. Late in his life ,and continuing since his death, reports surfaced documenting/alleging longtime patterns of plagiarism and inaccuracies in many of his published writings and other work. Additionally Ambrose has come under not unjustified criticism for his unabashed flag-waving and concentration on the men who made up the "elite" units rather than the poor kid who was drafted and thrown into the meat grinder with just a few weeks of training. Though ground combat is ground combat there is a difference between a highly trained paratrooper who had to be motivated just to get through the training and the eighteen year old who was assigned to the infantry with no say in the matter. That will shape perceptions and there are many who feel that Ambrose ignored the grunt because the grunt wasn't going to give a more rah rah account.

Well as I wrote at the beginning this is a not unjustified critique of Ambrose. However I feel that it should be pointed out that "D-Day:June 6, 1944" is a little different. There is flagwaving and you can hear the stirring music in the background (albeit faintly), but in all fairness to Ambrose many of the vets who were interviewed were average soldiers - not paratroopers and Rangers and commandos. As a result I think "D-Day" presents a more balanced account of the fighting and the soldiers. No there is not the anger or cynicism that one will find with other writers such as Paul Fussell, but there is also not so much chest thumping as was in "Band of Brothers". This isn't a bad book. It didn't present anything new to me. This day has been covered by hundreds of writers in the past seventy years, but it's still a readable account. He does especially fine work covering Omaha Beach.

If you're determined to hate Ambrose then you won't like this book . But if you're not very familiar with the war ,or don't have any strong academic opinions, then "D-Day: June 6, 1944" will prove to be informative and an involving read. It's popular history and sometimes that's enough.

Kathlyn says

This book was terrible. It was biased, factually inaccurate and reflected the author's sycophantic relationship with Eisenhower rather than any objective understanding of the events of June 6 1944.

RyanP says

About three months ago I came across *The Rising Tide*, by Jeff Shaara, in a box in my room. I have always been interested in the World Wars era, so I decided to give that book a try. I absolutely loved it and it inspired me to seek out new WWII novels. While searching for my next read, I came across *D-Day* and thought it would be a good book.

D-Day depicts the story of its namesake, both the day and preparations. On June 6, 1944, the United States and Great Britain led the Allied forces in a full-scale invasion of the Normandy coast in Northern France. Prior to the assault, the Soviet Union was suffering heavy losses while keeping Germany in check in Eastern Europe. Stalin demanded that the Allies open up a new front to relieve some of the pressure on Soviet Forces. The campaigns in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy were not enough, so the only option for the Allies was to liberate France, which had been taken under Nazi control in 1940. And so the largest invasion in history was formed. Over 150,000 Allied soldiers landed on the beaches codenamed Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. They crossed the channel in an armada of warships, landing craft, and other support ships. It was a feat of ingenuity. Deception, surprise, decoys, new technologies, and just sheer numbers and firepower enabled the Allies to establish a beachhead, officially opening a strong second front to the European Theater of World War II.

I found this book to be just phenomenal. I am utterly amazed at the scrutinizing detail put into Ambrose's narrative. The back cover states that about 1,400 interviews were compiled while writing the book. For just about every stage of the invasion, every event, there is an eye-witness account of what happened. With so many primary sources, the book creates a completely accurate account of *D-Day*, including the details put into planning the invasion.

The only negative thing I have to say is that there is an uneven distribution of fame in the book. By this I mean that the United States receives far more credit than the other Allies (with the other primary ones being the UK and Canada; the other Allies receive virtually no credit). I suppose that this is understandable, seeing as how Ambrose was born in the US and no doubt has a bias, as all people do. Regardless, Stephen Ambrose has composed an incredibly extensive account of what was one of the most important events in the last 100 years.

Simon says

Reading this you'd be forgiven for thinking that the US was alone at Normandy. One-eyed puffery and tabloid in its execution, as is Ambrose's way.

There are vastly better books on *D-Day* (Beevor and Hastings for a start).

Beanbrenner says

Extraordinarily interesting anecdotes? Check. Chest-thumping patriotism? Check. Unbiased, carefully vetted history? Ehhhhhh.

nanto says

Biar Menghayati ditambah membaca pidato Ike pada saat D-Day

*Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!
You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have
striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The
hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.
In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on
other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war
machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of
Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.*

*Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well
equipped and battle hardened. He will fight savagely.*

*But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of
1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats,
in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their
strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home
Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions
of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men.
The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to
Victory!*

*I have full confidence in your courage and devotion to duty and skill in
battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!*

*Good luck! And let us beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great
and noble undertaking.*

SIGNED

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Suaranya dapat didengar di link youtube ini

Kalau tentara Indonesia pernah mendapat pidato menggugah dari Jenderal Soedirman,

Pidato pertama sesudah pelantikan,

Hendaknya perjuangan kita harus didasarkan atas kesucian. Dengan demikian perjuangan kita lalu merupakan perjuangan antara jahat melawan suci, dan kami percaya bahwa perjuangan suci itu senantiasa mendapatkan pertolongan dari Tuhan. (18 Des 1945, di Yogyakarta, sesudah pelantikan Pangsar)

Anak-anak ku, Tentara Indonesia, kamu bukanlah serdadu sewaan, tetapi prajurit yang berideologi, yang sanggup berjuang dan menempuh maut untuk keluhuran tanah airmu. Percaya dan yakinlah, bahwa kemerdekaan suatu negara yang didirikan di atas timbunan runtuhannya ribuan jiwa harta benda dari rakyat dan bangsanya, tidak akan dilenyapkan oleh manusia siapapun juga." (Pangsar Sudirman, 5 Oktober 1949)

Pidato lain yang banyak dikutip di dunia maya,

Anak-anakku, tentara Indonesia, kamu bukanlah serdadu sewaan tetapi tentara yang berideologi yang sanggup berjuang dan menempuh maut untuk keluhuran tanah airmu. Percaya dan yakinlah, bahwa kemerdekaan satu negara, yang didirikan di atas timbunan runtuhannya ribuan jiwa harta benda dari rakyat dan bangsanya, tidak akan dapat dilenyapkan oleh manusia siapapun juga. Berjuang terus, saya tetap memimpin kamu sekalian. Tuhan insya Allah melindungi perjuangan suci kita. (Jan 1948, halaman Candi Borobudur)

(Sumber: dikutip dari link ini,) [pidato itu waktu acara latihan perang di Borobudur itu bukan yah?:]

Pidato di atas, buat saya mengingatkan pada sebuah game RTS (Real Time Strategy) yang latar ceritanya perang jaman Romawi. Setiap menjelang pertempuran, seorang jenderal sambil menunggang kuda akan berpidato di depan para prajuritnya. Inti dari pidato itu berisi alasan dan tujuan untuk meyakinkan bahwa pertempuran itu secara "moral" sah dilakukan. (Sebisa mungkin diklaim sebagai just war barangkali). Hal yang sama dari pidato jenderal virtual itu dapat ditemukan dalam pidato dari dua jenderal dunia nyata.

Lebih menarik lagi adalah memperhatikan pidato Eisenhower. Alinea ketiga merupakan uraian fakta. Misinya yang diuraikan di alinea pertama (the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world) tidak langsung dikuatkan dengan kalimat penambah semangat saja. Alinea kedua malah mengingatkan bahwa musuh yang dihadapi adalah musuh yang tangguh. Namun, ketangguhan itu dijawab dengan data di alinea ketiga.

Ini yang menarik buat saya. Seolah Eisenhower mengatakan, lawan yang tangguh itu tidak lebih yang kuat dari prajuritnya yang lebih tangguh. Kemenangan Nazi Jerman yang pernah dicapai pada tahun 1940-1941 tidak lagi berarti dihadapan kekuatan mereka saat itu. **The tide has turned!** Selanjutnya ia kembali pada alur sebuah pidato pengobar semangat, dengan menekankan pada dua alinea penutupnya: tanggung jawab kemenangan dan segenap restu dari Tuhan dalam kerja mulia prajuritnya.

Pidato yang cukup singkat itu masih menyisipkan rasionalitas yang layak disampaikan. Kenyataan musuh yang tangguh tidak ditutupi, meski keyakinan mereka lebih tangguh tetap harus ditekankan.

Semangat bukan berarti meremehkan kenyataan. Begitu catatan saya atas pidato Ike.

Dwight says

An excellent piece of research and writing. Another reminder of what the "greatest generation" did for our

nation and our world. We as Americans need to utilize the insights provided to us by our ancestors to pull together and work with one another to improve the plight of all Americans. What has happened to our nation? The greed, the self-centeredness? Where is our sense of community? I am so proud of the people of this era who came together for the common good. I hope and pray that our generation or future generations can do the same.

Tim says

As a brit this book really annoyed me. It's not about the Normandy landings; it's about the American landing on Omaha Beach. At every opportunity Ambrose trivialises and criticises the British, Canadian and other allied forces while giving us a chest thumping partisan view of the unequalled bravery of the Americans. The bias is embarrassing and a colossal show of disrespect to the soldiers of every other nation in the allied forces.

Rhonda says

My father (Warner Hamlett -D-Day vet and still doing well) was interviewed and quoted in this book. He is 93 years old and relives WWII every night in his dreams. He still goes out to his homemade bomb cellar during thunderstorms and screams in his sleep.

Stephen Ambrose is an excellent author. He double checks his details and sources, using first-hand accounts of events. My father was in the 29 infantry out of South Boston, VA when they stormed Normandy Beach. The book tells the story of D-Day soldiers through their own words.

I can tell you myself, Daddy's stories have never changed over the years and Mr. Ambrose (who interviewed my father personally) did an excellent job of telling his story and quoting him verbatim.

Megan says

Wonderful. I highly recommend Ambrose for historical reading. He makes things interesting and detailed and you feel like you really get to know somewhat what it was like being there. I will definitely be reading his other books. It's embarrassing that it took me almost 7 months to read this one though! This book was a testimony to me that Heavenly Father was with those soldiers that day. It reminded me of Captain Moroni and the title of liberty-when you are fighting for your liberty and your wives and children then God will be with you.

Tony says

May 8, 1994

Dear Prof. Ambrose:

I have read most of your books and enjoyed them immensely. I was therefore eagerly awaiting the publication of your new book about D-Day. It finally arrived at our bookstore and I immediately began, greedily, to devour it.

As it turns out, last Tuesday, I journeyed to Altoona, one-hundred miles east of here, to take my father to a hospital for some exploratory surgery. My father was an army medic, helping to chase Rommel through North Africa. He made it to Sicily where he suffered shrapnel wounds. Even now, when I read your histories of brave young men, I hear my father's stories of horror, joy, friendship and courage.

I was obviously very concerned about the surgery my father faced and the possible results of the concurrent tests. I knew I would have a long, lonely wait in the hospital waiting room. I brought your book. It helped. For long stretches of time the worry surrounding me abated as I turned the pages of that day on the beaches of Normandy.

Hours passed and the room filled with patients and their families. An old man came in, alone, and sat next to me. He smelled seasoned. I did not look up from my (your) book.

Finally the old man shouted at me, "What's that book about?"

I showed him the cover and said, "D-Day."

"I was there," he said.

I looked from his ice-blue eyes, down his unshaven face, to his windbreaker. There, over his heart, was a Screaming Eagle.

It happens that this man, George Adams, was a paratrooper in C Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne. I showed him your book and he began slowly looking through the pictures. After awhile I began to wonder if he would ever give me the book back without a fight. If so, I didn't like my chances.

I asked him if he was still close to the men he jumped with that day and his jaw set in a way that I've never seen before and cannot adequately describe. He says he goes to the reunions annually. He's thinking about going back this June to jump on the anniversary.

I gave him the address for The Eisenhower Center and urged him to write to you. I hope he does. Anyhow, he said he was going to buy your book.

I wanted to buy him a hundred beers and ask him a thousand questions. I wish my own reasons for being in that waiting room were not hanging like a cloud. But my concerns kept me there and George Adams was called out next.

We shook hands and I thanked him. He thanked me. I wanted him to know that there are many of my generation who appreciate what he did. I think we both felt our coincidental meeting was more special than odd.

He left and I sat there holding your book, full of heroes like George Adams and the man I was waiting for.

My Dad was all right: just some hemorrhoids. I pried him loose from the nurses and drove him home.

I wanted to share this story with you and to thank you for the gift you share with readers like me.

Sincerely

Jim says

This book is based on the oral histories of 1,400 men who were involved in D-Day. The majority of the book deals with one 24 hour period. Midnight, June 5/6 until midnight June 6/7. I learned about D-Day growing up. Mostly this was facts and figures. I have seen several movies about D-Day. Some were good. With the exception of a few names such as Roosevelt, Churchill, Eisenhower, and Montgomery I didn't know the people involved in one of the most historic events of the 20th century. In this book you get to meet and know some of the men who were there. Citizen soldiers as Ambrose refers to them. They were the children of the Great Depression. For many of these men it was their first time in combat. I call them men but many were teenagers. In this book you meet a 15 year old (he lied about his age in order to enlist) and a 16 year old. No matter their age they were men. This is not an easy read. It is full of military terms and acronyms. I often had to flip to a map in order to try and orient myself to the events taking place. I am glad I was reading the hardback version so that I could do this easily. There were many times in the book when the horrors of war were vividly brought home. Many of the soldiers, sailors, and airmen who were involved suffered grievous wounds and continued to fight. Even those who did not suffer a physical injury saw things that stayed with them and can only be described as a living hell. They did not come as invaders. They were there to liberate. There have been many movies about D-Day and they can be entertaining but to really learn about this day in history and appreciate the men who made this happen I would recommend reading this book.

Don Stanton says

Probably one of the top three of all of his books concerning the war in Europe. It is a great place to start reading his series of books about WWII. It would be great to read this and Pegasus Bridge at the same time. If you have an ability visualize, you will be moved.

I was in France in September of 2008. I'm not a tour guy, so we just went and when we wanted to go. Chelly, my wife, and I went to the cemetery in Normandy. I was nearly overwhelmed at the sight. When we came to the long stairway that led to Omaha Beach, I couldn't go down to the beach.

Standing there with the dead behind me and the sacred shore before me, I felt a huge surge of sadness, suffering, patriotism, honor, sacrifice and holiness wash over me all at once.

I felt honored to be at the cemetery, but unworthy to walk where those men willingly, knowingly gave their lives. That very altar of selfless sacrifice for freedom.

With over 9,000 emblems of Christ's sacrifice for us behind me, and the sandy emblem of those 9,000 dead in front of me, all I could do was weep.

Ambrose got it right.
