

WWII

D-Day: A Soldier's Journal

May 30, 1944

Today we finally moved. The action has begun. For the past few months I have been in England. We have trained and studied. Now it is time to go. The code name for our movement is Operation Overlord. I do not know when we will strike the Germans. I do know that our ultimate hope, months from now, is to **liberate**¹ Paris. But first, we need to get our foot in the door of Europe. I am afraid that Germany will slam the door in our face. Germany now controls most of the continent. But we will win.

June 5, 1944

We have left Britain now. We are heading towards the coast of France. The English Channel is rough and choppy. Our ships rock back and forth. The air is foggy outside, but very few men go up on the deck of the ship anyway. We are all kept below to prepare for the fight. Most of the men are quiet and keep to themselves. We know that our job is necessary, but we also know that many of us will die. It is clear now that we will **invade**² France on the beaches of Normandy. By morning, we will have landed. Who knows how long the fight will take, or who will survive...anything is possible for us, except defeat. We will win.

June 6, 1944

Today was the hardest day of my life. But we are succeeding. Over 160,000 Allied troops and 3,000 ships landed together along the coast of Normandy. We fought the waves to reach the shore and fought for every inch of sand up to the hills. We had nowhere to retreat except to the cold ocean. Our only choice was to push forward and make the Germans move backward. I found out that our generals had staged an invasion in Calais. Thousands of rubber tanks landed - empty, of course - in that town far away from here. While the Germans tried to defend themselves against balloons, we **stormed**³ the beaches here. Thank goodness for the distraction. I cannot imagine what today would have been like with more German troops facing us.

August 1944

Paris is ours. Today Allied soldiers marched into Paris and liberated France. After four years of German **occupation**,⁴ Paris is finally free.

¹ **liberate:** to set free

² **invade:** to enter a country and take over

³ **storm:** to violently attack

⁴ **occupation:** having possession and control of an area

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. This passage could be an example of which genre?
 - a. science fiction
 - b. mystery
 - c. historical fiction
 - d. fantasy

2. Which of the following happened first?
 - a. "Paris is ours."
 - b. an invasion was staged in Calais
 - c. a few months of training in England
 - d. 3,000 ships landed on the beaches of Normandy

3. The purpose of the staged invasion in Calais was to
 - a. distract the Germans.
 - b. assist the Japanese.
 - c. confuse the USSR.
 - d. help the Germans.

4. Where did the soldiers invade France?
 - a. the beaches of Calais
 - b. the beaches of Normandy
 - c. the beaches of Germany
 - d. the beaches of Spain

5. The passage is mostly about
 - a. the strategic reasons for attacking Normandy.
 - b. the best way to attack a beach.
 - c. a soldier's experience in World War II.
 - d. why soldiers refused to fight at Normandy.

6. How would you describe the soldier who wrote this journal? Why?

7. Why did the soldiers train for months before the invasion?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

_____ the Allies took the beach at Normandy, they were able to liberate Paris.

- a. During
- b. Although
- c. Without
- d. Once

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

D-Day was extremely dangerous for all of the soldiers who fought in Normandy.

What? D-Day

(was) What? _____

(for) Whom? _____

Where? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** liberate: to set free.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 610

Featured Text Structure: Sequence – the writer provides an order of events or steps in a process

Passage Summary: This passage is an invented diary of an Allied soldier before and after attacking in France on D-Day. In the passage, he is scared but confident of victory, and the Allies end up liberating Paris.

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Suggested answer: Answers will vary. Students could describe the soldier as brave because he faced many dangers and overcame them. He could also be characterized as realistic because he described the horrors of war and because he realized that it would be a very close fight between the Allies and the Germans.

7. Why did the soldiers train for months before the invasion?

Suggested answer: Soldiers trained for months before the invasion because it was very important, and they only had one chance to do it right.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

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9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

D-Day was extremely dangerous for all of the soldiers who fought in Normandy.

What? D-Day

(was) What? **extremely dangerous**

(for) Whom? **all of the soldiers who fought**

Where? **in Normandy**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** liberate: to set free.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.