



THE NATIONAL
WWII MUSEUM

Eisenhower Speaks

Primary Documents: D-Day Orders

A Lesson Plan from
the Education Department of the
The National World War II Museum

The National D-Day Museum
945 Magazine Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

www.nationalww2museum.org

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Eisenhower Speaks

Primary Documents: D-Day Orders

Primary sources can be documents, pictures, or artifacts that were produced during a certain time or even people who lived during a historical event. Instead of merely reading second-hand descriptions (secondary sources) of how soldiers felt during a battle, a good historian will also want to read the letters (primary sources) that soldiers wrote home. Generals, too, wrote down their feelings. We can learn a lot about a general's style, motivation, and outlook by studying his writings.

OBJECTIVE: By reading two documents that General Dwight Eisenhower wrote before D-Day and answering questions about them, students will learn about the general's personality, his motivation, and gain an insight into his success. After answering the questions, students will be able to write their own messages of inspiration in the style of the examples.

BENCHMARKS: **Grades 7-8:** H-1A-M4; H-1A-M5; H-1A-M6, H-1B-M16; H-1B-M17; H-1C-M17
Grades 9-12: H-1A-H2; H-1A-H3; H-1A-H4; H-1B-H13

DIRECTIONS:

1. Pass out copies of the two writings by Eisenhower to students to read or have students read them out loud, along with their descriptions
2. Pass out worksheet questions for students to complete.
3. Hold a short discussion about the way Eisenhower uses language to motivate his men in his Order of the Day. State specific examples. What can we learn about Eisenhower's personality from his hand-written note? Discuss the use of documents as a primary source of historical information. Explore the pros and cons of using such sources.
4. Assign students the task of writing an *Order of the Day* for students at their school. The style of the Order should be motivational, while the content can be anything from an upcoming football game or standardized test, to a call for school pride through less littering, recycling, etc.
5. Students can volunteer to read their Orders to the class.

ASSESSMENT: Components for assessment include the worksheet and the student-written Orders.

ENRICHMENT: Have students write notes in which they take responsibility for some aspect of their lives. Tell them to carry those notes in their pockets for a week. At week's end discuss the value of this exercise.

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Answering Questions about Primary Documents

Directions: After reading the two D-Day documents from General Dwight Eisenhower, along with their descriptions, answer the questions below on a separate sheet of paper. Indicate where you find your answers. If you use quotes, be sure to put quotation marks around them.

1. Who is Eisenhower addressing in his Order of the Day?
2. What words and phrases does Eisenhower use to convey the idea of teamwork?
3. If he is trying to motivate the troops, why does he say, “Your task will not be an easy one”?
4. What is the importance of honesty in communication?
5. What historical information about WWII can you learn from studying this document?
6. After reading Eisenhower’s D-Day failure message, describe his concept of taking responsibility.
7. Why do you think Eisenhower gives so little information about the attempted invasion?
8. What historical information about D-Day can you learn from studying this document?
9. Describe Eisenhower’s personality based solely on these two documents.
10. What other primary sources of information would you want to have to create a fuller description of Eisenhower?

Eisenhower's Order of the Day

Every American soldier, sailor, and airman participating in the D-Day invasion of Normandy received this message of inspiration from Supreme Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower, just before D-Day.

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



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, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

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

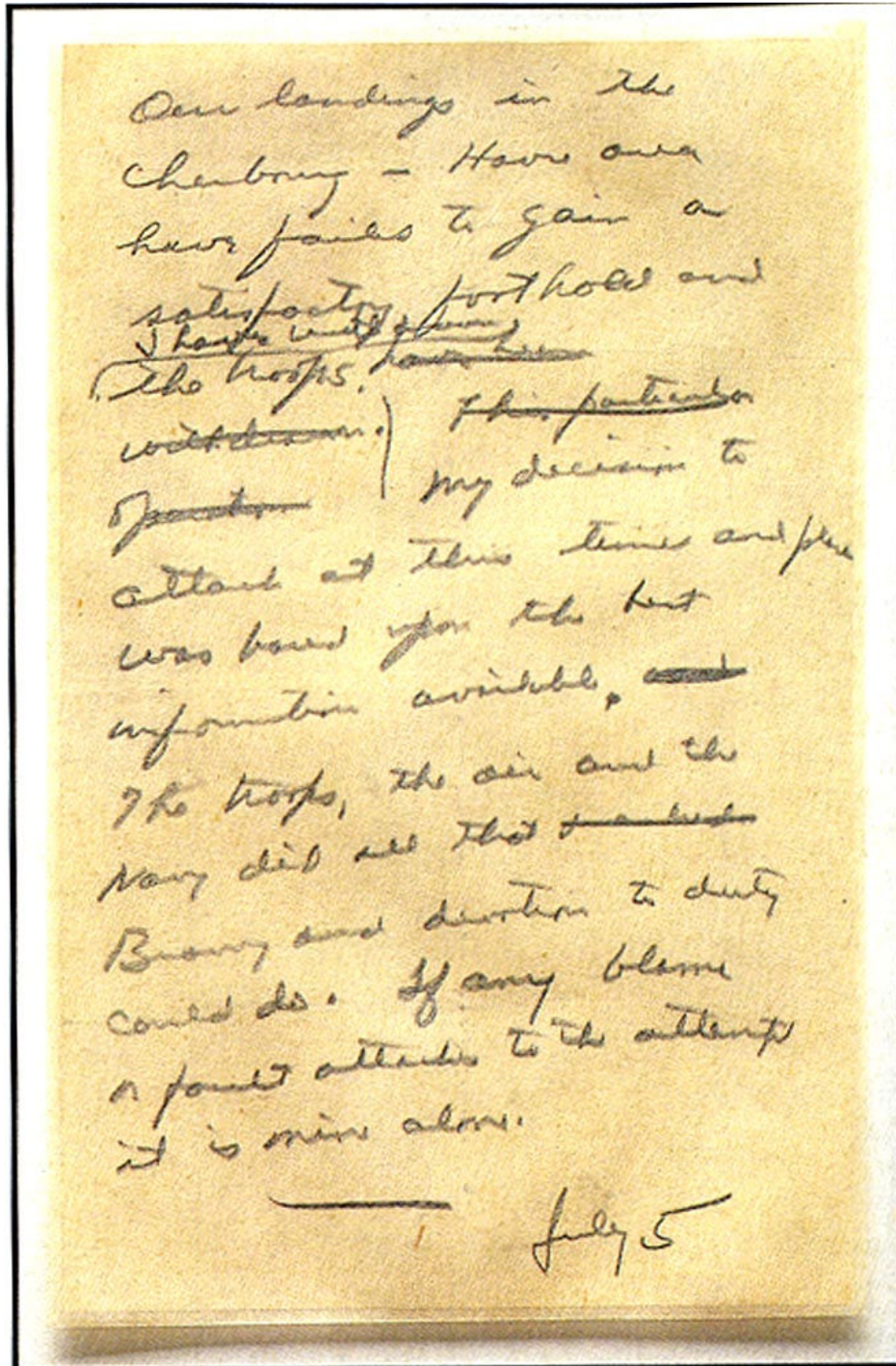
Dwight D. Eisenhower

Eisenhower's D-Day Failure Message

General Eisenhower wrote this message just prior to the invasion, to be read in case Operation Overlord failed. Either through stress or fatigue he misdated it July 5, instead of June 5.

"Our landings in the Cherbourg-Harve area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone."

Eisenhower Library and Museum



Our landings in the
Cherbourg - Harve area
have failed to gain a
satisfactory foothold and
~~I have withdrawn the~~
troops. ~~My decision~~
~~to attack at this time and place~~
was based upon the best
information available, ~~and~~
The troops, the air and the
Navy did all that ~~bravery~~
bravery and devotion to duty
could do. If any blame
or fault attaches to the attempt
it is mine alone.

July 5