

D-Day, H-Hour

“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only” (Matthew 24:36).

It was early June, 1944. The world that then was lay in the grip of the “Axis” powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan. Though the Allied forces were making strides, the tide was not yet turned. Indeed, the future of the free world was very much in doubt.

The supreme commander of Allied forces, General Dwight D. Eisenhower had been planning the invasion for months. The Germans were expecting the assault, but they did not know two key factors: the *where* and the *when*. The Germans relied on logic and chose to concentrate their forces and armaments at Calais, France. It was closer to the southern part of England than the eventual insertion point, the coast of Normandy. The date for the invasion was initially set for June 5, 1944, but inclement weather pushed the date back.

With a hope that the weather was clearing, Eisenhower sent forth the troops on June 6, to carry out the operation codenamed “OVERLORD.” The day of the invasion was designated by “D” and the hour, by an “H.” Hence, D-day was the day and H-hour was the hour at which the invasion began, early in the morning. Americans would do well to keep the date of June 6 marked on their calendars and in their minds, for it was, arguably, *the day* that marked the turning point of the war, thus leading to our continued freedom.

What strikes me now, however, is the German response to an event they knew was coming. Though they were prepared to some extent to defend the shores of Normandy, they first guessed that the invasion would take place at Calais. With inadequate forces at Normandy they were overrun and the essential breach was opened for the Allies.

Additionally, the Germans were caught off guard in regard to the time of the invasion. Field Marshal Rommel was, in fact, away from the front lines and at home to celebrate his wife’s birthday. Thus, when the invasion occurred, there was inadequate leadership of the defending troops. Both of these factors add up to one thing: lack of preparation.

Though a very significant battle, in a very significant war, “D-Day” was an earthly conflict with earthly consequences. There is coming a day which will have eternal consequences for all of us. No miscalculation or lack of preparation will be excusable. (See 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12ff.)

—Lance Cordle