The Battle of Normandy

At the beginning of World War 2, Germany invaded Poland, causing France, Great Britain and Canada to declare war on Germany. By the spring of 1940, the German army was ready to invade France, defended by not only the French military, but also a sizeable British force as well. Within six weeks, the Germans defeated the Allies and seized control of France. By 1944, the Germans knew that the Allies, also now including the United States, among others, would attempt an invasion of France to liberate Europe from Germany. The Allied forces, based in Britain, decided to begin the invasion by landing a huge army at a place called Normandy Beach, which is located on the northwest coast of France. Code-named "Operation Overlord", and commanded by American General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Allies landed on June 6, 1944 at five beaches in the Normandy area with the code names of: Utah Beach, Omaha Beach, Gold Beach, Juno Beach and Sword Beach. Prior to the actual amphibious invasion, Allied planes pounded the Nazi defenders and dropped thousands of paratroopers behind German lines the night before the seaborne landings. Local French Resistance forces, alerted to the imminent invasion, engaged in behind-the-lines sabotage and combat against the occupying Germans.

In April and May 1944, the Allied air forces lost nearly 12,000 men and over 2,000 aircraft in operations.   Edwin Roy   Terrence Butt

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