Utah Beach Monument

GPS N49 24.931 W1 10.545

The Utah Beach Monument is located at the seaward end of Highway D 913, about 3.6 miles northeast of Ste. Marie-du-Mont.

American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 25 American cemeteries and 26 memorials, monuments and markers in 16 countries. The Commission works to fulfill the vision of its first chairman, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, promised that "time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

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For more information on this site and other ABMC commemorative sites, please visit:
www.abmc.gov

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Photo: The National Archives

Citizens of Carentan, France, erected this silent tribute to an American soldier who fell there in June 1944. The inscription reads, MORT POUR LA FRANCE. (DIED FOR FRANCE.)

The Utah Beach Monument commemorates the achievements of U.S. VII Corps forces that landed and fought in the liberation of the Cotentin Peninsula from June 6, 1944 to July 1, 1944.

The monument is a red granite obelisk set in a small park overlooking sand dunes of the historic site.

VII Corps units landed by air and sea to pursue three missions: expand the Allied beachhead, seal off the Cotentin Peninsula, and thrust northward to liberate Cherbourg.

The Utah Beach terrain differed from other invasion beaches. Its dunes were relatively shallow, followed inland by expanses of flooded and marshy terrain crossed by narrow causeways.

Photo: The National Archives

American soldiers plunge into the surf and wade to Utah Beach, June 6, 1944.

German defenses included multiple obstacles along the beaches, plus infantry and artillery capable of blocking exits inland. The Germans also reinforced their units throughout the Cotentin Peninsula and enhanced fortifications around Cherbourg.

June 1-5, 1944: Medium and heavy bombers of the U.S. Eighth and Ninth Air Forces attacked German positions.

June 6, pre-dawn hours: Troopers of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions landed by parachutes and gliders near Ste.-Mère-Église and Carentan.

June 6, 6:30 a.m.: H-Hour. Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division began storming the beach, carried by Navy and Coast Guard vessels. The 1st Engineer Special Brigade and 2nd Naval Beach Battalion landed to clear the beaches for reinforcements.

June 6, 9:30 a.m.: The 82nd Airborne Division completed clearing Ste.-Mère-Église, the first town liberated in France.

June 6-June 14: Reinforcements such as the 9th, 79th, and 90th Infantry Divisions arrived.

June 14: The 101st Airborne Division finished liberating Carentan. Also, VII Corps forces met units pushing westward from Omaha Beach, thus completing the connection of the Normandy beachheads.

June 17-18: VII Corps units reached the Cotentin Peninsula's western coast, trapping German forces on the peninsula.

June 20: U.S. forces (the 4th 9th, and 79th Infantry Divisions) began attacking Cherbourg's outer defenses.

June 27: The Germans surrendered Cherbourg.

Photo: 82nd Airborne Division Museum

Col. Harry Lewis (second right), commander, 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, confers with an 81-mm mortar crew near Ste.-Mère-Église, June 8, 1944.

Photo: The National Archives

Cherbourg, June 28, 1944. U.S. soldiers led by a captain (front left) escort German prisoners of war out of the city on the day after its liberation.