

On the sixth of June 1944, the great secret is divulged.

The Fourth of June 1940... the evacuation of the B.E.F. and Allied troops from Dunkirk was completed. Four years later almost to the hour we go back, back to the same Normandy Coast which saw the closing chapter of the Battle of France. The Allied invasion of Europe from the West is launched...D.Day.... the Second Front and the Second Battle of France. Against the background of these Pathe Gazette pictures of that tragic but glorious exit we announce the fact that never in the history of newsreels have such vast plans been made for the coverage of the last great act of liberation.....to bring to the screen, from the first day of our assault on the Western seaboard of Europe, the history of Allied invasion. Four years ago Europe was Hitler's. The lights of freedom went out. Now the world of free men strikes in all its assembled might at the weakening chains of bondage.

Here are the first pictures of the opening of the Second Front. Pictures which security demands should be meagre at this stage, yet thrilling because they carry the first flush of excitement as the mammoth task gets under way. Over the French Coast go our bombers as Invasion hour dawns, to blast enemy lines of communications. From the coast of Britain the floodgates are opening to release the tide of Allied Soldiers.

The great curtain of secrecy is still drawn as invasion troops embark and our Prime Minister makes a last minute visit to the Assembled Armada.

The first of a series of landings in force is how Mr. Churchill describes the operation. Author of the Victory V sign, he watches over the great preparations, and sees the start of the Master plan. Four thousand ships and thousands of smaller vessels are involved in the enterprise, and the British, Canadian and American troops employed sustained by 11,000 first line aircraft. The great Allied co-operative effort which sets forth to seal the fate of Germany. Let it now be said that the Royal and Merchant Navies are performing their colossal task of carrying, maintaining and assisting the ground forces with indescribable efficiency and success.

While all this is going on there goes out to Europe by radio the warnings issued by Supreme Headquarters... the alert is sounded not only in France, but in Norway, Belgium and Holland. The underground movements are given instructions and to the people of France there comes the voice of the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower.

Eisenhower Extract.

This is the opening phase of the Campaign. Great battles lie ahead. I call upon all who love freedom to stand by us. Together we shall achieve victory.

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Pictures of Paratroops are no new thing to us. We have followed through many of their training films and mass displays. But here you see men marching to go aloft with the sure knowledge that when they next set feet on land it will be on French soil - the first men to move in on the Normandy coastline near the town of CAEN. That fact is still unknown to them as General Brereton waves the G.A.7's into the air - - the first of the invaders.

Two of the Channel Islands (themselves well in the invasion area) appear below ... Guernsey and Alderney. Out of the night sky there come the troop carriers and gliders while the great armada of ships bears down on the Cherbourg peninsular and the many places nearby.

While civilian Britain sleeps history's greatest story is being written. Between midnight and breakfast the D Day plan is launched. And when the news breaks, the people at home rush to buy it. Eagerly they absorb every line of the rationed information as it comes to hand. The news is good - far better than any dared to hope. Bridgeheads are won - we penetrate inland - - airstrips are under construction, and best of all, casualties amazingly light. On that high crest of hope and optimism we end, at the same time readying for the fuller news pictures which we will present in our next editions of Pathe Gazette.