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HVL LESSON TITLE:

# FIVE BEACHES

DEVELOPED BY: ERIN COGGINS

## PROTESTING THROUGH SONG

GUIDING QUESTION:

**How did popular music address  
the unpopular view of the  
Vietnam War?**

## OVERVIEW:

On June 6, 1944 the Allied forces landed on five beaches dotting the French coastline at Normandy. Each beach landing had its own story, including ones of success and ones of failures. In this lesson, students will meet Mr. Harold McMurren, a WWII veteran who landed on Utah Beach.



**SUBJECT(S):**  
Social Studies/Geography



**VIETNAM VETERAN(S):**  
Harold McMurren



**DURATION:**  
60 Minutes

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# PROTESTING THROUGH SONG

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“When we hit the beach, we knew-there was no doubt in our mind-that we had to take that beach. Things like we went through are just things you don’t forget.”

Veteran Harold McMurran

## OVERVIEW:

On June 6, 1944 the Allied forces landed on five beaches dotting the French coastline at Normandy. Each beach landing had its own story, including ones of success and ones of failures. In this lesson, students will meet Mr. Harold McMurran, a WWII veteran who landed on Utah Beach.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

On June 6, 1944 the Allied forces crossed the English Channel to begin the liberation of Western Europe. D-Day, also known as Operation Overlord, was the largest amphibious invasion in history. 156,000 troops participated in the Normandy beach landings.

By August 1944, all of northern France had been liberated, and in spring of 1945 the Allies had defeated the Germans. Historians often refer to D-Day as the beginning of the end of World War II.

## OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Utilize map skills in understanding military strategy.
- Conduct historical research.

## STANDARDS:

### AL: 11: 9

Describe the significance of major battles, events, and consequences of World War II campaigns, including North Africa, Midway, Normandy, Okinawa, the Battle of the Bulge, Iwo Jima, and the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences.

### AL: 11: 9 a, b

Locating on a map or globe the major battles of World War II and the extent of the Allied and Axis territorial expansion and describing military strategies of World War II, including blitzkrieg, island-hopping, and amphibious landings

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## MATERIALS & DOCUMENTS

[Memoirs of WWII-Harold McMurran Video](#)

Listening Slip (Doc A)

D-Day Landing Map (Doc B)

Teacher Notes (Doc C)

Research Sheet (Doc D)

Internet Connection

## PROCEDURES

### ACTIVITY 01

- Distribute the Listening Slip (Doc A) and inform students that they are going to watch a brief video on World War II veteran, Harold McMurran.
- Show the [Memoirs of WWII-Harold McMurran Video](#)
- Give students a few minutes to finish answering the questions and discuss.

### ACTIVITY 02

- Distribute a copy of the D-Day Landing Map (Doc B) to all students. **NOTE:** Print out in color if possible.
- Using the Teacher Notes (Doc C), lecture the students on the five D-Day beaches. Be sure to point out the location of each beach/ instruct students to locate those beaches on their maps as well as locations of other important locations. **SEE DIRECTIONS ON DOC B.**

### ACTIVITY 03

- Distribute the Research Sheet (Doc D). Read the directions aloud as students read along.
- Give students 30-minutes to complete the research and complete the map activity.

### IDEAS FOR EXTENSION

- Divide the students into groups to conduct the research. They can present their assigned beach research to the class.
- Instruct students to locate veterans' stories on the landings of the beach and write a news story based on these primary sources.

## **FIVE BEACHES**

### LISTENING SLIP

DOC A

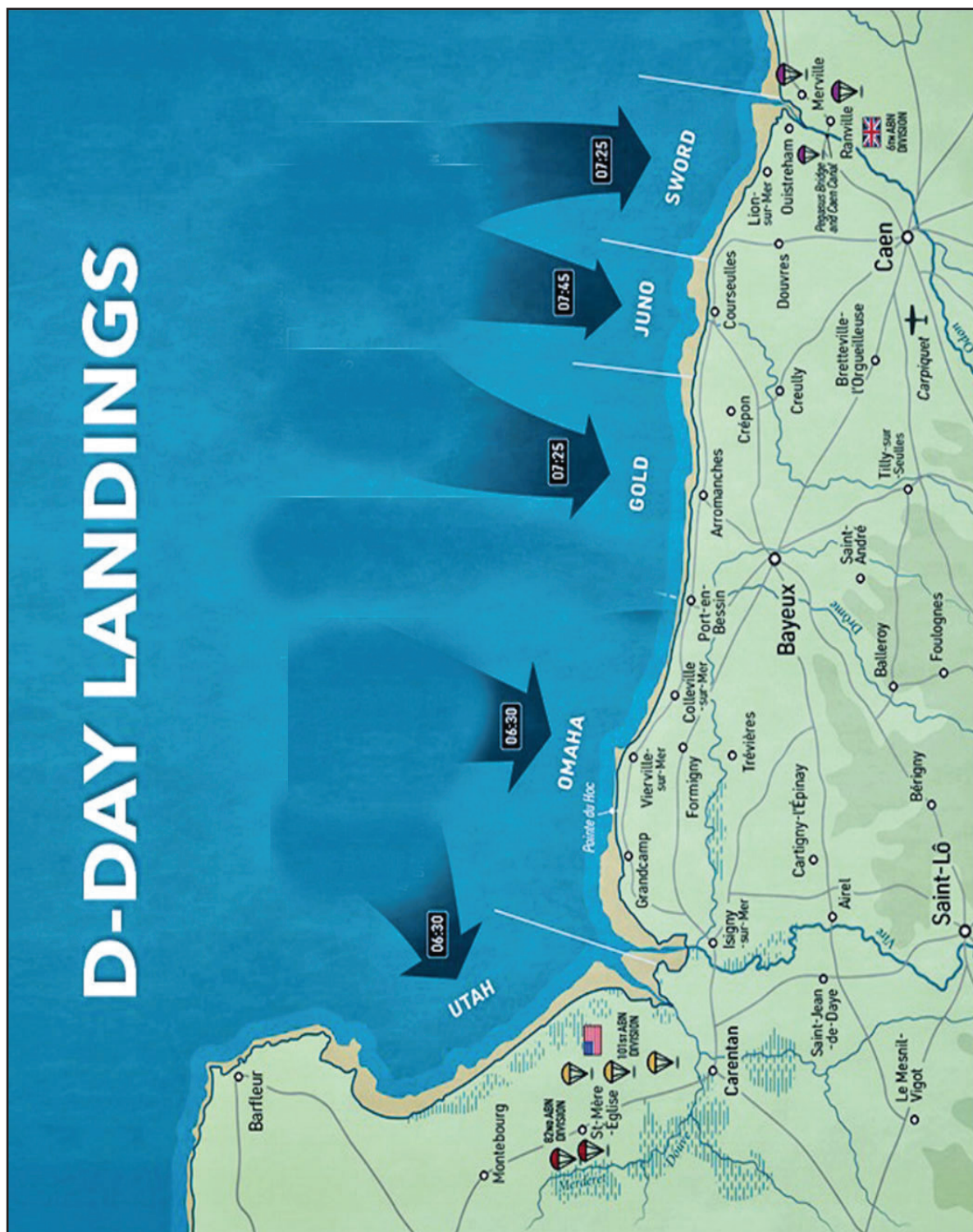


1. What was Mr. McMurren's first thoughts about the war?
2. What service did Mr. McMurren serve in during the war? What speciality?
3. What did Mr. McMurren say about the uniforms and the Atlantic and Pacific sides of the war?
4. Mr. McMurren said he was sent to the English coast, one of the most dangerous areas. Why was the area so dangerous?
5. What was Operation Overlord?
6. What does Mr. McMurren say about fooling the Germans about the location of D-Day?
7. How does Mr. McMurren describe the landings?
8. What does Mr. McMurren credit in why they took the beach?

## FIVE BEACHES

### D-DAY LANDING MAP

DOC B



# FIVE BEACHES

## TEACHER NOTES

DOC C



### D-Day Facts:

D-Day was the largest seaborne invasion in history and was the turning point in World War II. About 156,000 Allied troops, supported by 4,000 ships crossed the English Channel to land on five beaches dotting the Normandy, France coastline.

### The Criteria:

- The enemy must remain ignorant of the proposed landing site
- The enemy must be prevented from bringing up reinforcements quickly once the allies landed
- Complete Allied air and naval superiority in the English Channel
- Local defences must largely be destroyed by air and sea bombardment

### The Strategy:

**TEACHER DIRECTIONS:** As you read this portion aloud, have students locate and circle the cities/ places on the map. **NOTE: THESE ARE IN BOLD TEXT.**

The troops landed on 5 beaches: **Omaha, Utah, Juno, Gold and Sword**

Before the troops landed on the beaches, airborne divisions landed behind enemy lines to cut communication lines and to ease the German response.

British 6th Airborne Division dropped northeast of **Caen**, near the mouth of the Orne River, where it anchored the British eastern flank by securing bridges over the river and the Caen Canal.

On the other side of the invasion area, the U.S. 101st and 82d Airborne Divisions dropped near **Ste. Mere-Eglise** and **Carentan** to secure road junctions and beach exits.

# FIVE BEACHES

## RESEARCH SHEET

DOC D



Beach	Utah	Omaha	Gold	Sword	Juno
What Allied country landed here?					
What were the objectives after landing?					
What obstacles did the troops encounter during the landing and on the beachhead?					
How long did it take to secure the beachhead?					
What were the casualties?					
How far inland did the troops make it?					