



Dwight D. Eisenhower



## Teaching Guide

### SEGMENT 7, WEBISODE 12

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



#### Segment Overview

By June 1944, the Allies had finally, after protracted and bitter fighting, overthrown Mussolini and driven the Germans out of Italy. The critical task of retaking “Fortress Europe” from Hitler remained.

Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower encouraged the troops who would storm the beaches of France in the Allied D-Day attack at Normandy, “You are about to embark upon a great crusade...The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you...You will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.”

The D-Day attack, which initiated the full-scale invasion of Europe, was the largest and most powerful invasion force in history and a feat of complex military organization, supply, and coordination. For months in advance, Allied bombers pounded German defenses along the Normandy coast, and on June 6, 1944, combined Allied forces landed. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, oversaw a massive offensive, which included 5,000 ships and 90,000 American, British, and Canadian troops. Some 20,000 men were dropped into France by parachute and glider.

Code-named Operation Overlord, the invasion surprised the Germans, who had been led to believe through calculated leaks, decoys, and deceptions that the invasion would take place elsewhere. By nightfall, Allied troops were firmly entrenched on French soil, and it was the beginning of the end for the Axis. In late August, Allied forces liberated Paris, which had been in German hands since 1940.

#### Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.

- What obstacles did the Allies face on D-Day?
- What advantages did the Allies have?
- What was their goal?

2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

The Allies faced an entrenched and well-fortified enemy who could fire down on attacking troops from high cliffs. Although the Germans knew an



#### Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss, Cont.



History Sleuth



What do you  
Think?



Moving Toward  
Freedom

attack was planned, they thought it would occur elsewhere. The weather was poor, and the Nazis did not expect an attack at that time. The Allies wanted to establish a beachhead from which to recapture France and ultimately the rest of occupied Europe.

### Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Remembering D-Day*.
2. Working with teammates, students read the first-person account from the D-Day invasion. Students discuss the account, answering the following questions.

Does this change your idea of war? In what way?

### Teacher Directions

After viewing photos or a video clip of the D-Day invasion, students write a journal entry describing how they would have felt if they had been part of the invasion force.

### Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *The Tuskegee Airmen*. Working with teammates, students read the sheet.
2. Students create a World War II recruiting poster advertising the achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen and inviting men to enlist.



## Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Language Arts** — Students read *Jacob Have I Loved* by Katherine Patterson. Partner Discussion Guide available from the Johns Hopkins University Talent Development Middle School Program.

**Science/Technology** — Students explore the scientific and technological advances made during World War II. These include submarines, V-1 and V-2 rockets, amphibious vehicles, and the Jeep, among others. Students explain the scientific principles that made such advances possible and how they helped the war effort.

**Language Arts** — Students read some of the first person accounts of World War II.

**Technology** — Students listen to the sounds of World War II @ <http://pilotonline.com/extra/wwii/sounds.html>.

**Language Arts/Art** — Students research women photojournalists during the war years and create a card game with drawings or photographs of the women and biographical information.

**Math/Library** — What were the actual numbers of women who served in the armed forces during the war? Students research the statistics and compare them to the number of men in the same fields.

**Music/Library** — What were the top recordings and hit songs of the war years? Who were the most popular musicians? Students use encyclopedias and other reference books such as *The Columbia Chronicles of American Life 1910-1992* by Lois Gordon and Alan Gordon, Columbia University Press. Then students listen to the music of the era.

**Local History** — Students research how women in their community supported the war effort in the Second World War.

**The Arts** — Students watch some of the best movies of World War II and determine the purpose and viewpoint of the films and what they had in common. Some of the best include *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, *The Longest Day*, *A Walk in the Sun*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Sands of Iwo Jima*, *Battleground*, *Twelve O'clock High*, *To Hell and Back*, *The Naked and the Dead*, *Hell Is for Heroes*, *The Bridge at Remagen*, and *The Big Red One*. *Saving Private Ryan* and *Schindler's List* are two recent mature movies set in World War II; however, these may be unsuitable for middle school students.

**Note to the Teacher:** Preview any film to determine its suitability for your students.

**Research/Technology** — Students research the partnership of soldier and dog during World War II. (In the United States alone, over 30,000 dogs have served in the armed forces.) Students visit the web site: Dogs of War @ [www.leos.net/articles/wardogs.html](http://www.leos.net/articles/wardogs.html).

## Remembering D-Day



### Don Dawkins

*Don Dawkins was sent to the front just a few months after D-Day in Normandy.*

I enlisted in the army in October of 1942. I was eighteen years old and a freshman in college...

We were bivouacked in the fields in Normandy. Afterward, they took us up to front line positions in Lorraine in the middle of the night. We just jumped into fox holes as the Fourth Armored Division vacated them. It was sheer chance which hole you got into...each hole was about 5-10 yards apart, with two men in each

hole. We had cloth panels to mark the front line...so that airplanes could see where the front was...

...In the morning I was amazed to see what the front line really looked like. It was just these holes spread out... and nothing in back of us as far as the eye could see... Across from us, about 100 yards away or so, were the Germans. We could hear them shouting and hear their trucks and tanks clanking around. At night, between the lines, you could sometimes hear wounded Germans calling for water or their mother.

The front was nothing at all like what I had envisioned. I thought there would be echelons of troops at the front but there were not. You had the feeling you were right in front of the German army, with very little in back of you. Occasionally the Germans would lob mortar shells over to our positions and once in a while a mortar shell would land in a hole; one went into a hole two down from me and killed the two fellows in there. One of them was a particularly good soldier. That's the way luck works in combat...

Soldiers live like animals, outside all of the time, rarely getting any shelter... In my platoon, there were thirty-eight men, and after seven or eight weeks of combat there was nobody left but me; the others had either been killed or wounded except for the platoon sergeant...

I woke up one morning and couldn't walk.... My feet felt like wooden blocks and hurt so they carried me to a field air station... The doctors took color movies of my feet because I had such a bad case of frostbite/trench foot with gangrene. They basically let me rest there for several weeks and tried to figure out what to do to save what they could of my feet...In December they amputated my toes. *(He was moved to a hospital back in the States, where he received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star).*

## *The Tuskegee Airmen 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group*



*National Archives & Records Administration*

**D**uring the Second World War, African Americans fought a “Double V” campaign—one V stood for victory over the enemy overseas and the other V stood for victory over prejudice and discrimination in the military and at home.

The prejudice faced by black soldiers seemed to have changed little from the days of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Colored Troops during the Civil War. More than one

million African Americans served during World War II, and they protested the conditions they faced in the segregated armed forces. This segregation within the United States military seemed particularly out of place since the Allies were fighting a racist Nazi enemy.

Meanwhile, African Americans on the home front played an important part in the war effort. Large numbers of black men and women left the south to take jobs in defense industries located in the northeast and Midwest, just as other African Americans had during the First World War.

Beginning in 1940, black leaders increased their efforts to have African Americans admitted to the Army Air Corps. The War Department replied that since there were no black flying units, there was no need for black pilots. Secretary of War Henry Stimson and others doubted the efficiency and initiative of blacks to make good pilots. In September 1940, Congress passed an amendment that called for the induction, selection, and training of blacks in all military organizations. To comply, the army created all-black aviation squadrons. But these squadrons received no special training, and in fact were assigned menial tasks in hospitals, kitchens, and on base grounds. There were still no plans for black pilots—the Air Corps could not envision black pilots giving orders to white men, landing at white fields, having their

planes serviced by white technicians, or eating and sleeping with white servicemen.

President Roosevelt listened to the black leaders but promised nothing—it took Eleanor Roosevelt’s involvement in a conference on the participation of blacks in national defense for the doors to open. In January 1941, the announcement came that blacks could become Air Corps pilots.

Nearly a thousand black aviators—including several women—trained in an isolated base near Tuskegee Institute. Despite the segregated training, this was a great opportunity. To be a fighter pilot was a skilled and daring job—perhaps the most glamorous during the war. And black pilots overwhelmingly demonstrated that they did possess the skill, intellect, and courage to be exceptional fighter pilots. They fought in the aerial war over North Africa, Sicily, and Europe. Called “Black Birdmen” by the Germans, who both feared and respected them, and “Red Tail Angels” by white bomber crews, they were known for not losing bombers to enemy fighters as they escorted fighter planes to strategic targets in Europe. They also destroyed enemy rail traffic and coastal surveillance stations and engaged in air-to-ground strafing missions.

Many of the surviving black pilots remained in the military after the war and spearheaded the integration of the armed services beginning with the United States Air Force in 1949. A statue in the Honor Park at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs carries the following inscription praising black airmen:

*“They rose from adversity through competence, courage, commitment, and capacity, to serve America on silver wings, and to set a standard few will transcend.”*