

## Grades 9-12

### Omaha Beach: Honor and Sacrifice

On D-Day, a roughly 7,000-yard stretch of beach in Normandy, France given the code name "Omaha" proved to be the Allies' biggest obstacle to the success of Operation Overlord. The assignment to take Omaha Beach, establish a beachhead, and move inland into France was given to two American divisions - the already battle-hardened 1st Infantry Division (The Big Red One) and the untested 29th Infantry Division (The Blue and the Gray), who had yet to see any combat in World War II. American Naval Combat Demolition Units also hit the beach that day, writing their own individual stories of horror and heroism. Seven decades after the "Boys of Omaha Beach" landed, many veterans are returning to this part of the Normandy coast for the last time. Other soldiers who were there on D-Day have also come back for the first time since that historic day, looking for closure as they enter the final years of their lives. OMAHA BEACH: HONOR AND SACRIFICE shows the very personal stories of several veterans as they return to Omaha Beach and documents the celebration in Normandy that continues to this day as a result of their acts of courage and determination on June 6, 1944.

**After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning**

#### Question Box 1

- What is the big message of this episode? Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support your analysis.
- Prove quotes that the veterans in this episode said that stood out for you.
- What is the central idea (main claim or thesis) of the text? Is there a quote from the TV show that represents the author's central idea?
- Choose 2-3 unfamiliar words for the program and define them.

#### Question Box 2

- Why would veterans want to return to a place that recalls a time in their life that was so difficult and involved war/
- What parts of this episode did you particularly like? Dislike? Why?
- Does it make sense to "celebrate" a wartime event?
- What is the one thing you would want people to know about Omaha Beach?
- What unanswered questions do you still have?

#### Box 3 (Tasks)

- Amphibious tanks for D-Day were designed to be launched 2 miles from the shore. At

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Omaha, the tanks were launched 3 miles out. In calmer waters, the tanks had little problem, but at Omaha Beach 27 of 29 tanks did not make it to shore. The tanks were designed for waves up to one foot. At Omaha Beach the waves were up to 6 feet. The tanks weighed 35 tons. Show what a one foot ocean wave might look like using a coordinate graph. If the wavelength remained the same, but the amplitude increased to 6 feet. How might that change the force of the wave? How would a wave like that push a 35 ton vehicle off course?

- Check out more about Omaha Beach at this site: <https://www.d-day-overlord.com/en/d-day/beaches/omaha-beach> What more did you learn after exploring this site?

#### **Box 4 (Enrichment)**

- There are heroes of every race, color, creed, sex and nationality in every War. The Congressional Medal of Honor is the highest Military Honor that a member of the armed services can receive. Research some Medal of Honor winners during WWII and some Medal of Honor Winners in our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Tell the story of one hero. Why did you choose to tell this person's story?

#### **Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)**

- Did this episode evoke any feelings? If so what were they and why do you think you felt that way?
- Do you know anyone who has served in the military? If so, who?
- Would or are you considering a career in the military? Why or why not?
- Research careers in the military and develop a list of pros and cons.
- Were there more pros than cons or vice versa?
- Would any of the information you learned change your answer to number 3? Why or why not?