

# D-Day Glossary

From Robert Wilde, Your Guide to European History.

Military operations are thick with codenames, acronyms and nicknames that need explaining to the layman. Unfortunately, the written history of those events is no different. Every account of D-Day is littered with terms like LCI, PIAT; even 'D-Day' itself needs explaining! This glossary will help you translate any unknowns.

**AA:** Anti-Aircraft.

**AEF:** Allied Expeditionary Force; twelve countries contributed to Overlord: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the UK and the US.

**Allies:** Refers to the nations who fought together against the Axis Powers.

**Atlantic Wall:** Nickname for the German defences along the northern and eastern coasts of France.

**AVRE:** Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers; on D-Day these were Churchill tanks fitted with a Petard mortar and other specialist equipment.

**Axis:** (or Axis Powers) Germany, Japan and the Italian Social Republic (the official Italian government now fought on the Allied side).

**BAR:** The Browning Automatic Rifle, used by the Allies.

**Belgian Gate:** A metal trap designed to be hidden under high tides and tear the bottoms away from boats or landing craft.

**Bn:** Battalion; An infantry Battalion ranged from 600 – 1000 men.

**Bazooka:** US infantry anti-tank rocket launcher.

**CO:** Commanding Officer

**Churchill, Winston:** The British Prime Minister.

**Churchill Tank:** A British Heavy Tank named after their Prime Minister.

**D-Day:** Originally the term for the date when a mission or operation took place, but now associated with 6th June 1944, D-Day for Operation Overlord.

**DD:** Duplex Drive, used on amphibious vehicles.

**DD Tank:** A tank fitted with a Duplex Drive which allowed amphibious use.

**Doughboy:** A nickname for US soldiers more traditionally associated with the First World War.

**DUKW:** Amphibious 2 ½ ton Truck; pronounced 'duck', the DUKW usually carried supplies.

**DZ:** Drop Zone.

**Eisenhower, Dwight:** Supreme Commander of the AEF.

**Fortitude:** A long-term operation to conceal the true whereabouts of the D-Day landings.

**FUSAG:** First U. S. Army Group; this was entirely fictional and created to conceal Allied intentions.

**GI:** A nickname for US troops, derived from the acronym 'GI' (Government Issue) which was stamped on their uniforms.

**Gooseberries:** Artificial harbours created by the deliberate sinking of ships.

**HE:** High Explosive.

**Hedgehog:** German beach defence created out of three metal poles welded in a sloping pyramid, designed to damage landing craft.

**Higgins Boat(s):** Generic name for the flat-bottomed landing craft created specially for Overlord by Andrew Higgins; each type had a different codename (see L).

**Hobart's Funnies:** Nickname for a range of tank adaptations and additions designed by Percy Hobart, including mine clearers and carpet layers.

**LBW:** Landing Barge.

**LCA:** Landing Craft, Assault.

**LCE:** Landing Craft, Equipment.  
**LCF:** Landing Craft, Flak.  
**LCI:** Landing Craft, Infantry.  
**LCI (L):** Landing Craft, Infantry (Light).  
**LCOCU:** Landing Craft, Obstacle Clearance Unit.  
**LCM:** Landing Craft, Medium.  
**LCR:** Landing Craft, Rockets.  
**LCT:** Landing Craft, Tank.  
**LCT (A):** Landing Craft Transport, Assault.  
**LCT (R):** Landing Craft Transport, Rocket.  
**LCV:** Landing Craft, Vehicle.  
**LCVP:** Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel.  
**LO:** Liaison Officer.  
**LSI:** Landing Ship, Infantry.  
**LST:** Landing Ship, Tank.  
**Luftwaffe:** German air force, largely ineffective on D-Day thanks to Allied air superiority.  
**LZ:** Landing Zone.  
**MG:** Machine Gun.  
**Moaning Minnie:** the nickname given by Allied troops to the German multi-barrelled Nebelwerfer mortar.  
**Mulberry/Mulberries:** Artificial harbours constructed from prefabricated sections; towed across the channel and attached together, they were designed to speed up reinforcement and supply.  
**Neptune:** The naval section of Operation Overlord.  
**Overlord:** The codename for the D-Day landings.  
**Panther:** The German Mark V Tank.  
**Panzer:** German Tank.  
**PIAT:** British 'Projector Infantry Anti-Tank', a British Infantry anti-tank weapon.  
**SHAEF:** Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.  
**Spandau:** General British name given to German army machine guns.  
**Stick:** Paratroops dropped in one go from one plane.  
**Stonk:** British term for concentrated or intensive artillery fire.  
**Teller Mine:** German anti-tank mine; attached to atop poles or hedgehogs along the Normandy beaches.  
**Tiger:** The German Mark VI Panzer tank, a heavily armoured vehicle with an adapted 88mm gun.