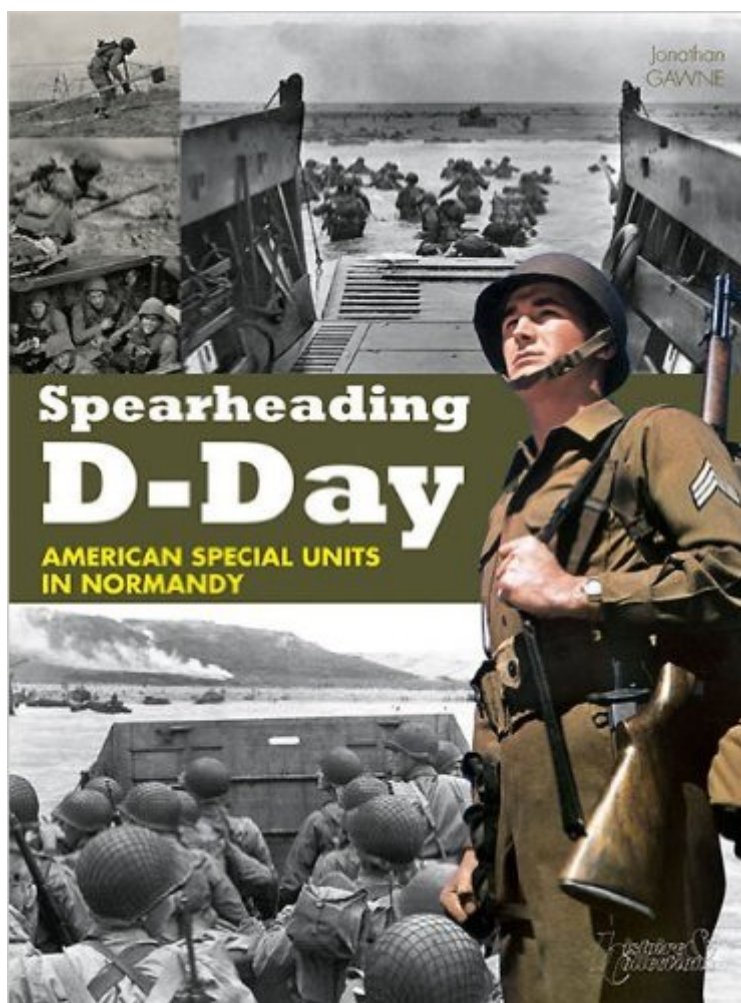


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# Spearheading D-Day: American Special Units In Normandy



## Synopsis

The invasion of Normandy is undoubtedly one of the most celebrated military events of the 20th century. However, many of the smaller units that played important roles have been forgotten or ignored, with the result that many unconfirmed or erroneous myths about the American landings have been repeated in popular books. In "Spearheading D-Day," military historian Jonathan Gawne examines the US landings at Omaha and Utah with an eye to what other writers have ignored. Utilizing the original military records and extensive veteran interviews, this book covers such diverse topics as how the invasion tactics were developed, the organization of the units involved, as well as the uniforms and equipment of the assault troops. For the first time, both Navy officers directly involved with the first waves at Utah Beach speak out on what actually caused the misdirection of the Utah landings. The harrowing experiences of the advance demolition teams on Omaha are described, as well as the daunting tasks of US engineers, frogmen, pathfinders and Rangers. Heavily illustrated, the emphasis of "Spearheading D-Day" has been placed on little-known photos, including a selection of rarely seen color stills taken from Coast Guard movies of the Normandy invasion. REVIEWS "focuses on the small units usually forgotten" "tells for the first time the full story of these units" "well supported by uniform reconstructions and well produced color and black and white photographs (including color stills rarely seen from US Coast Guard movies of the D Day Landing). Military Modelcraft International, 11/2011 For even the most self-assured D-Day savant, it is impossible to read this book and not learn something new, such as the composition of the engineering teams who dealt with obstacles and mines on the beaches. Gawne's research is deep and air-tight, and his grasp of military organizations, uniforms, equipment and weapons borders on the unbelievable. "It is easy to list items carried and uniforms worn, but no writing can capture the shaking voice a man has when he talks of the sea running red with the blood of his friends," Gawne writes poignantly. John McManus, Wall Street Journal The text is informative and put together with such passion I am in no position to make any negative criticism. " this book is an absolute essential. Must have. Go get. -War History

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jonathan Gawne's *Spearheading D-Day* is not a book for those interested in what staff officers were planning or the politics of the day. This is an on-the-ground detailed book full of images that gives enthusiasts clear and detailed information on the clothing, weapons and insignias that troops wore on that fateful day. Mr. Gawne is a research historian and his work crosses the divide between history and modern anthropology. He is exacting in his detail and it is clear that he wants the reader to come away with an understanding of just what soldiers wore and how they lived.

My uncle landed on the Normandy Beaches on D+1. He was a Sergeant in a transportation company that was in action from D-Day through to peace. He left the Army as the company's First Sergeant. Coming off the ships his trucks were loaded with gas, food rations and medical supplies. Because of his service I bought *Spearheading D-Day* to learn more about those small but vital smaller units. WOW!! Did I learn about things I never had heard of!! I had never heard about rhino ferries, JASCO, port companies, railhead companies, maintenance companies. Did you know that immediately after the initial landing Engineer Airfield Battalions landed to start building air fields on the bluffs? Did you know that the most valuable motor vehicle in the whole invasion was the bulldozer? Each ship off loaded a bulldozer last so it could turn around and push the ship off the beach. Did you know that by the end of Day One the engineers had off loaded steam shovels and cranes and road grading equipment and started clearing the roads. Yes, there were Dump Truck Companies!! How about Quartermaster platoons that went over the battlefield and picked up rifles which they cleaned and repaired so they could be reissued? How about the Marines at Normandy or Navy Beach Battalions or MP Escort Companies or complete repair shops or fire fighting companies or signal photo companies -- and on and on!! This is a book for people who know about the Big Red One's fighting men and want to know who supplied the backup. Oh, one more thing - Did you know that there was such a thing as Kitchen Barges which supplied food to the crews of the hundreds of boats running back and forth from ships to beaches? Great Read - Buy It!!!

Very Good book! I Think anyone interested in D-Day would like this book.the only complaint I have is the text print seemed kind of small.

Very impressed with the quality and detail of the book this far

no problems

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