

# Newsweek

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## War-Matured Nation Hears D-Day News With Restraint

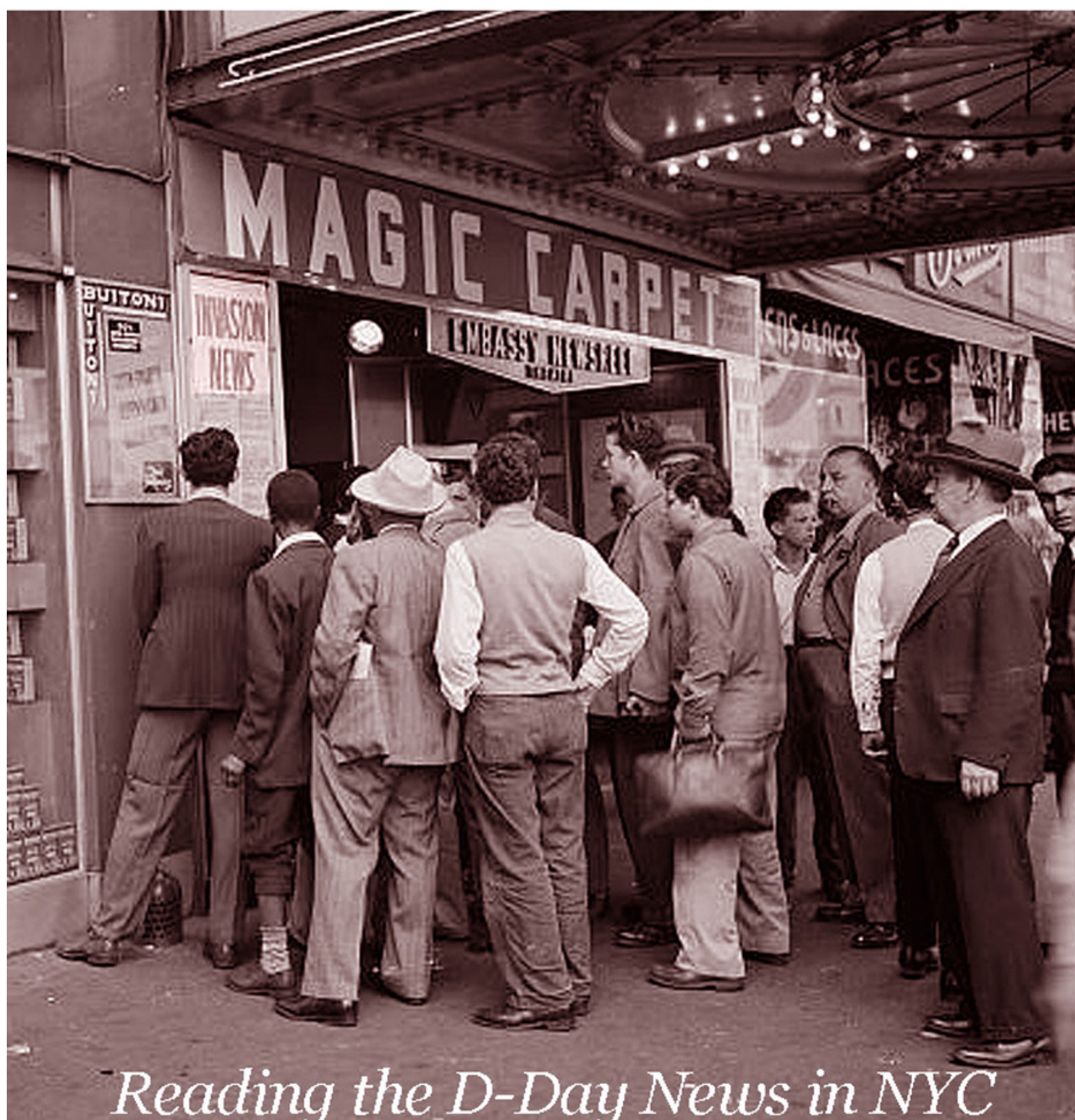
Subdued Home Front Sees  
Invasion as Hazardous Launching,  
Not as Celebration Signal



*D-Day services at Saint Vincent De Paul Church.  
New York City*

*Now it seems an age ago. But D Day for decades hence, will mean to millions even more than Armistice Day implied. The panorama of America on that day is news of historic proportions and NEWSWEEK thus presents it.*

Out of the Salina yards a train whistle's eerie call echoed across the moonlit Kansas night. To the east and to the west, across the continent, a multitude of sounds took up the tocsin: air-raid alarms, fire sirens, factory loud-speakers, historic Virginia church bells pealing as they had during the American Revolution, the tolling of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, a bugle blasting the graveyard-shift torpor at a California war plant, the human shrill of a latter-day Paul Revere racing through the darkened streets of Hartford.



*Reading the D-Day News in NYC*





**Workmen pray in a New Jersey shipyard**

By the dawn's early light America awoke to the knowledge that its D Day had come. Electricity meters clocked a sudden spurt in kilowatt loads as house lights and radios went on; telephone switchboards jammed as excited householders passed the word along. By morning on June 6, scarcely a family failed to know that the nation's sons and brothers, husbands and sweethearts were even then storming the beaches of Normandy to begin the Allied liberation of Europe.

**Day of Prayer:** Neither ticker tape nor torn-up telephone books, neither roaring parades up Broadway nor dancing in lesser-known streets—indeed, none of the usual Mardi-Gras spirit of red-letter days—marked the invasion's long-awaited coming. With uncanny oneness of gesture, America turned to prayer.

Attendance at Catholic churches rose more than 50 per cent; special Protestant and Jewish services were thronged by an unceasing succession of worshipers. Many were women—middle-aged matrons whose ample bosoms bore service pins, war workers wearing slacks and carrying lunch boxes, and girls in light summer dresses, their young heads decked with handkerchiefs.

There were those who felt no need for church: the girl who fell to her knees at a busy Detroit intersection; the Covington, Ky., women who sat in buses reciting their rosaries; the Coffeyville, Kans., families, still in night attire, who knelt on their front porches; prison inmates, school children massed around flagpoles, servicemen at domestic camps, and hospitalized veterans of Tunisia and Sa-





### Wounded soldiers read all about it in an Illinois veterans' hospital

lerno. In Corpus Christi, Texas, the parents of 50 servicemen crawled two blocks on their hands and knees in D-Day penance; en route from Washington to New York, a clergyman led train passengers in an impromptu service.

On the evening of D Day, President Roosevelt led a radio audience estimated at 100,000,000 in a prayer of his own composing: "Our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor . . . Lead them straight and true . . . Their road will be long and hard . . . Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them."



*D-Day Synagogue Services, June 6, 1944*

**Day of Thought:** The average American town on D Day reflected the restrained spirit of a quiet Sunday. Aside from knots of grave-faced folk reading bulletins in the windows of local newspapers, flag-bedecked Main Streets were strangely empty. Bars and liquor stores closed. Theaters and night clubs found scant patronage. Wide-open Northern Kentucky underwent an unprecedented drought; wide-open Reno, Nev., closed its gambling joints for the first time since the funeral of Sen. Key Pittman in 1940. Most department stores remained open, but business was not as usual. Most sporting events were canceled (see page 84).

Newspapers and radio cut advertising to make space for war bulletins. To the nation's everlasting credit, this extensive coverage evoked only isolated complaints—one from a woman who protested the absence of her favorite soap opera. The networks' listening audience rocketed. In Atlanta, inmates of the Federal penitentiary won permission to wear their ear-



*D-Day at Home*

*Sailors and Civilians Read the Electronic Signs in New York's Time Square*

phones during all non-working hours. At Fort Worth, Texas, a judge held up testimony in the murder trial of Jesus Silva so that jurors could listen, too.

As the news poured in, the nation's running commentary was a barometer of its intense preoccupation with developments on the French beachheads:

*I gotta boy somewhere over there . . . My sister is a nurse in England . . . My brother is a torpedo man on a destroyer . . . My baby, he's 21, he's in the air corps . . . Le Havre? Dammit, that's where I landed in 1917 . . . My son's a paratrooper. Don't know whether he's in England or France tonight.*

In New Orleans the Tricolor waved proudly from the old French quarter and civilian and military refugees from Vichy voiced fresh hope that they would soon return to the boulevards of Paris. Fervently Americans subscribed to this optimism; they said amen to the comment in Tacoma, Wash., from E. N. Eisenhower, brother of the Allied supreme commander: "Dwight never undertook anything he couldn't finish."

**Day of Action:** The nation did more than talk and listen on D Day. With new energy, farmers bent to their crops and war workers to their lathes. Absenteeism fell to a new low. In Illiopolis, Ill., Remington-Rand reported that women on the M line, producing the 103 bomb fuse, had outdone themselves; in Cleveland, production of Curtiss Helldivers zoomed. Publication of details of the vast mechanics of invasion gave a lift to workers making fabricated ramps for LSTs in Rochester, N. Y., and to those building Douglas skytrains in Oklahoma City.

The National Maritime Union unanimously voted to cut its members' stay on the "beaches" and sent them hurrying to the nearest hiring halls. In Columbus, Ohio, and in Kansas City new applicants

**Three in One:** *Cameras don't always see eye to eye—that was evident in these unretouched photographs of the President made all in the same night—invasion eve. Between the buoyant good humor (left and center) and the grim visage (right) with its marked resemblance to Woodrow Wilson appears a sharp age difference. The Roosevelt health, as reported last week by White House physi-*



*D-Day at Home*

*ian Vice Admiral Ross McIntire: "Better physical condition than the average man of his age."*

for war work flooded United States Employment Service offices. News of the invasion cut short many a strike: that of 36,000 aeronautical workers at the Wright plant in Lockland, Ohio; of 600 CIO steelworkers at the Pittsburgh Pressed Steel Co., and of 5,000 coal miners in Birmingham, Ala. Others that continued: that of 750 women AFL workers at Springfield, Mo., a factory producing Army pants, and that of 2,500 employes at the du Pont rayon-division plant in Nashville, because the company would not dismiss two supervisors suspected of being shielded from the draft.

America's renewed urge to give freely of itself was reflected in crowded waiting rooms and appointment books of Red Cross blood-donor headquarters. Typical percentage zooms: 100 per cent in Chicago, 300 per cent in Indianapolis, 48 per cent in Denver, 30 per cent in San Francisco. New York headquarters of the Women's Army Corps reported a 10 per cent boost in recruiting.

Perhaps most important, the nation dropped its War Bond cash-ins by as much as 10 per cent and jumped the gun on the scheduled June 12 opening of the \$16,000,000,000 Fifth War Loan Drive. One community after another oversubscribed quotas as if in response to Connecticut's slogan: "We move with our troops."

**Significance**

Never before in the nation's history had an event of such tremendous import evoked such widespread restraint. On comparable historic dates—April 6, 1917, Nov. 11, 1918, Dec. 7, 1941—the flood-gates of national feeling had burst wide open in tangible expressions of exhilaration, relief, shock, and rage. The phenomenon of Americans husbanding their emotions was a new one for students of mass reaction.

Behind the wall of reserve thrown up by the home front lay these factors: (1) the biggest publicity build-up in history had heralded the invasion and thus knocked out all but the most immediate elements of surprise; (2) great crusade though it was, the crusaders faced deadlier weapons and harder risks than ever before—a grim fact underscored by the knowledge that double the number of American men and boys overseas in the last war faced the enemy this time.

Finally, the nation's news sense had matured. Inclined to weigh more deliberately the carefully worded—and censored—communiqués and dispatches from the battlefield, civilians were not yet ready to throw hats in air and celebrate victory. Their sober caution was reflected in the words of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson: "Conditions will be changing from day to day . . . It is to our good to avoid excess of optimism or pessimism. It will be an aid to our men in battle if we stick fairly close to what is actually going on today, and enter the realm of the future only with discretion."