

U.S. Army soldiers use a Jeep to move a Very Low Altitude (VLA) antiaircraft balloon during a training exercise in southern England before D-Day. The VLA balloon could be moored to the ground or to a ship by a heavy mooring cable, but its lift was not particularly strong, so it could be moved using the method depicted here. The VLA balloon provided a simple yet effective means of preventing enemy aircraft from conducting strafing or dive-bombing attacks. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-179839*



A field full of U.S. Army M1 40mm Automatic Antiaircraft Guns and M1A1 90mm Antiaircraft Guns awaits the cross-channel attack that will bring them into contact with the enemy. Sights like this were common across England during the buildup toward D-Day. Each weapon is covered with a canvas tarp to prevent exposure to the elements. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-189322*





A lone soldier looks out over a field full of M3 37mm Antitank Guns and M1A1 90mm Antiaircraft Guns during the buildup of military equipment in England prior to the Normandy landings. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-189324*





Ford GPA amphibious utility vehicles and Dodge WC-51 Weapons Carriers sit in a field in England waiting for the impending invasion that will take them to France. By this stage of the war, the U.S. Army was a thoroughly mechanized fighting force that would soon become a critical part of a sweeping war of maneuver in northwestern Europe. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-189323*





A U.S. Army corporal takes inventory of a warehouse storing rope bundles. Although not usually considered an important part of the U.S. Army's military might, rope would become a valuable commodity during the campaign that followed the D-Day landings. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-189805*





U.S. Army soldiers stack bundles of Square Mesh Track (SMT) that will be used as a surfacing material in the construction of advanced landing grounds in France after the invasion. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-189363*



African-American U.S. Army soldiers stack bundled sections of Perforated Steel Planking (PSP) at a supply depot in England shortly before D-Day. Sometimes referred to as “Marsden” or “Marston” matting, PSP was a standardized, perforated-steel matting material developed to facilitate the rapid construction of temporary runways and landing strips. Sections of this matting could be easily interlocked to provide a stable, all-weather surface that could facilitate the swift establishment of advanced airfields. PSP was a critically important asset supporting the projection of airpower over northern France. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-189325*





This view of the engineer depot at Thatcham, Berkshire, shows some of the different types of construction vehicles being amassed in England prior to the invasion. Here, Allis-Chalmers HD10W tractors, Caterpillar D4 tractors, and Caterpillar D7 bulldozers can be seen parked together in anticipation of the journey toward Germany. *National Archives and Records Administration/US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-189366*