

“You could tell the anxiety was ... very great”



BIOGRAPHY:

Jean had joined the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRENS) in September 1943 and trained in meteorology. She met her future husband, Harold, while working on the weather forecasts at Southwick House. Southwick was command central for D Day planning.

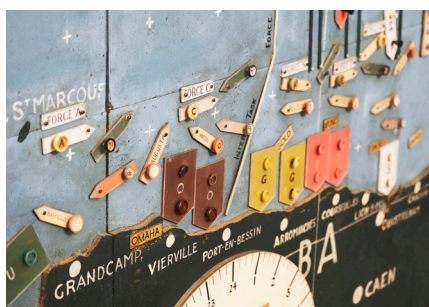


LISTEN TO JEAN TALK ABOUT D-DAY

<https://collections.nmrn.org.uk/Details/museum/97079>

ROLE IN D DAY (OPERATION NEPTUNE):

The navy needed calm seas and low winds to land troops and tanks in Normandy. Ideally, they also wanted a full moon with no cloud cover. Without modern methods of weather forecasting, there were a huge number of meteorologists involved in the planning for D-Day, trying to find the best timing for the invasion. Jean was part of a team plotting weather charts in the build up to D-Day. She knew the predicted drop in winds would give enough of a weather window for General Eisenhower to launch the invasion on 6th June.



Map link: weather charts <https://dday.nmrn.org.uk/>



Artist’s impression of the map room at d day
© https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Southwick_House_map_room_in_operation_1944.jpg#filelinks



DISCOVER MORE ABOUT D-DAY using these primary sources from our online collections portal:

Jean worked alongside her future husband, Harold. His memories are recorded here:

<https://collections.nmrn.org.uk/Details/museum/96936>

WRENS made up a significant part of the plotting room staff at Southwick, as this photo illustrates:

<https://collections.nmrn.org.uk/Details/museum/137774>

Photograph of WRENS on a meteorological training course:

<https://collections.nmrn.org.uk/Details/museum/115624>

WRENS were an essential part of the D Day effort, and recruitment continued throughout the war.

<https://collections.nmrn.org.uk/Details/museum/175401>