

Royal Mail News

D-Day

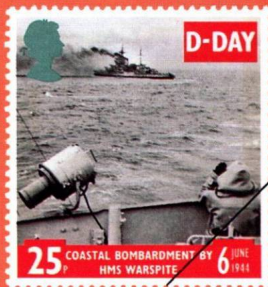
To mark the 50th anniversary of D-Day, Royal Mail will issue five special stamps on 6 June 1994. They will be available at all post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, and Philatelic Counters. The stamps are all of **25p** denomination, the basic rate for inland 1st class letters and letters to European Union countries. The stamps are printed as a horizontal *se-tenant* strip.

The design feature: Groundcrew reloading RAF Bostons; coastal bombardment by HMS *Warspite*; commandos landing on Gold Beach; infantry regrouping on Sword Beach; and advancing inland from Ouistreham.

postponement. In the early hours of 6 June, amid wind and rain, the first troops of the liberated armies set foot in Normandy. No fewer than 150,000 soldiers were landed. By 12 June the Allies had secured a bridgehead over 60 miles long, but more than a month of heavy fighting followed before the armoured breakout, intended to mop up the remnants of the German Army in northern France, took place.

After the battle of Normandy and the liberation of Paris, few doubted that the Allies would win the war in Europe – it was merely a question of when victory would come. In September 1944 the Home Guard (Dad's Army) was disbanded and the black-out became a "dim-out". Britain's beaches were cleared of mines and the barbed wire rolled back. The Air-raid shelters and pillboxes became the setting for children's games. In the Far East, of course, the Allies battle with Japan was far from won. But for the people of Britain, if not those in France or Germany, the war in Europe was nearly over.

The stamps were designed by Keith Bassford



During 1943 a master plan under the codename "Operation Overlord" was drawn up – the aim to attack Germany's Atlantic wall from England.

By 1944 the tide of war in Europe was turning. In great secrecy southern England and Wales became an armed camp for the fourteen US and British army corps and two tactical air forces that would eventually cross the Channel. More than 3000 vessels were assembled, and hundreds of aircraft and gliders were gathered at airfields in the Midlands. Altogether some 3 million service personnel were involved.

"England is expectant, almost hushed," wrote a contemporary diarist. "Every time we turn on the radio we expect to hear that the great invasion of Europe has begun." 5 June was chosen as D-Day, but bad weather caused a

who has previously designed the 1984 Mail Coaches, 1985 Film Year, 1986 Industry Year, 1989 Microscopes and 1992 Europa issues.

Technical details

Printers: The House of Questa Ltd

Process: Offset-litho

Size: 35 x 37mm

Sheets: 100

P perforation: 14

Paper: OBA free (OBA = Optical Brightening Agent)

Phosphor: Two Phosphor bands (with fluor)

Gum: PVA

Presentation Pack: No. 248, price £1.60

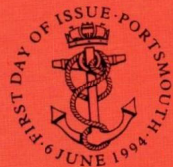
Stamp Cards: Nos 162 a-e, price 25p each



On 6 June 1944, BBC heard some long-awaited news. Here is a special bulletin from John Snagge. D-Day has this morning the Allies began the north-western front of the European fortress... For Britain, and in the war-torn regions



Number of stamps: five; 14 stamps. Date of issue: June 1994. Postal: vertical. Pack number: 248. Design: John G. Acknowledgements: Imperial War Museum. Further details about British postage stamps: see page 10.



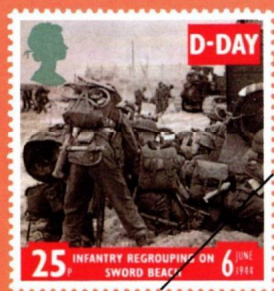
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First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, and Philatelic Counters around a week before 6 June, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps cancelled with a pictorial “First Day of Issue” postmark of the Bureau or Portsmouth, price £1.89 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.61 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 6 June.



Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Portsmouth cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or South East Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, SLOUGH SL1 1AA. The outer envelope should be endorsed “Pictorial First Day of Issue postmark”.

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial “First Day of Issue” handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and

others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail’s magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe, £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).

New Stamp Books

New 50p and £1 machine-vended books go on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, and Philatelic Counters on 6 June. They will be third in the Coaching Inns and Prime Ministers series which began in January. The new 50p book features “The Golden Cross”, London, the £1 Sir Winston Churchill who was Prime Minister 1940-45 and 1951-55. The designs are by Andrew Davidson and Harry Brockway respectively. Both books have been printed by Harrison & Sons Ltd and contain two and four 25p stamps respectively. The stamps are the same as those contained in the 50p books issued on 1 November 1993, 25 January and 26 April 1994 and in the £1 book of 26 April 1994.

These new books will be available from philatelic outlets from 6 June; they will be sold in vending machines as stocks of earlier issues are exhausted.

