



## From Yards to Hards:<sup>1</sup> Preparing Allied naval forces for the 1944 Normandy Landings

Naval Dockyards Society 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (in-person)  
In partnership with The D-Day Story, Portsmouth  
The D-Day Story, Portsmouth Saturday 18 May 2024

Sponsored by the Society for Nautical Research



### ***How were UK and overseas naval establishments occupied in constructing, supplying and transporting troops, harbours and pipelines?***

The Allied assault on German-occupied France on and after D-Day (6 June 1944) was only possible through naval support, from the largest warships and merchant vessels through to the smallest landing craft. Existing dockyards, harbours and shipyards in the UK, the US, Canada and Bermuda played a vital role in building, preparing, maintaining and repairing the Allied fleets. Remains of these coastal installations survive as tangible heritage of this endeavour.

However, the magnitude of the projected naval and land forces required many more temporary bases and facilities, which entailed systematic forward planning. The roles of these establishments included supporting landing craft flotillas, building Mulberry Harbours,<sup>2</sup> embarking troops and supplies, and supplying fuel via the PLUTO pipeline. Workforces were dedicated to planning, victualling and furnishing all kinds of supplies. Personnel went through an equivalent period of training and preparation.

We are seeking original research about the *prelude* to D-Day: its planning and execution involving dockyards, shipyards and harbours, including temporary naval facilities and infrastructure, remains of which may survive.

**If your proposal is accepted** - *you will present in-person* - we will pay UK travel expenses, conference fee, lunch, publish and give you a copy of the journal. Your talk will be 30 minutes, the printed paper 6–10K words, due 31 August 2024.

Send your title, a 300-word synopsis, a 100-word biography and queries by **15 December 2023** or earlier to Ann Coats [avcoatsndschair@gmail.com](mailto:avcoatsndschair@gmail.com)

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<sup>1</sup> A hard is a firm beach or foreshore where marine structures can be built and launched; it is also a sloping roadway at the water's edge for beaching vessels and landing materials – the Normandy beach hards were reinforced with concrete blocks.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Humberstone, 'Mulberry Harbours: Operation Neptune's Artificial Ports', *Dockyards* 27:2, December 2022, 30-34.