

June 6 Tuesday, 1944

About 2 a.m. heard the sound of many 'planes warming up at Wormingford [Airfield], but soon went to sleep. Woke soon after 3 to a tremendous roar, and looked out to see the whole sky filled with 'planes, all carrying their navigation lights, dropping red and green flares in every direction. Just before 4 the Boxted 'drome lights came on, and all the Thunderbolts took off in pairs in a series of shattering roars, coming up over the house and flashing away to the [south-west]. The sky was just a mass of gleaming lights of all colours, and the house trembled with the vibration of thousands of engines. The moon, nearly full, shone on fleecy clouds in the west, and there were dark rain clouds drifting away to the north. Have never known the Americans to take off before dawn, so guessed this must be something big, and was not surprised to hear on the 8 o'clock news that there had been heavy raids on Calais and Dunkirk and that British naval forces were off Le Havre, while the Germans had announced that landings were being attempted both by sea and air.

And so comes what we were promised was to be the great climax of the whole war, when the great allied armies are to storm "Hitler's fortress" and "liberate starving Europe". But where is the excitement we were promised? And the hardships? We were told that on "D-Day" every road would be shut, all trains stopped, no buses, and everybody living under siege conditions. Yet all is just as it was yesterday – buses running, trains running, soldiers marching out to training, little children going to school. At the office, hardly a mention of this great "final" battle, except to remark on the noise of 'planes during the night, and say wisely "Ah! As soon as I heard them, I knew it was the invasion."

At lunch, people were almost quiet when the news came on though, for once. Little Ann Barrie looked pale and worried, and her hands shook. Perhaps she has a friend or a brother out there. Troops are landing near Caen and Bayeux. Where is the [Tapestry?]

Went out to Horkesley at 6, to see the sugar beet competition. Just beginning to rain, but there was a good show, in a field at Potter's Farm...

Work began at 7, and went very well, while bombers and Thunderbolts roared overhead on their way to Normandy. One huge flight of Thunderbolts came over from Raydon. Rain began harder, and when it was all over we went into the farmhouse and had beer and whisky, after which the Chairman [Colonel Round] [of the Lexden and Winstree War Agricultural District Committee] gave the prizes, and made a rousing speech, all about what a great day this was, etc.

Went along to the [Observer Corps] post [at Great Horkesley] at 9, for another 4 hours training. Am doing very badly. Felt terribly nervous, and wondered if there was likely to be a raid tonight. Weather got worse, but still planes came back from France, and the aerodrome lights were on. Some 'planes landed with headlights like motor cars.

Heard the King's speech on the radio. He seemed very tense and harsh. Wonder what he is really thinking. News at midnight said that Rome was quite safe, so we have something to be thankful for.

Rain got worse after 1am and was thankful to get into bed by 2 o'clock, tired out.