



Langton Matravers Local History Preservation Society

D-Day would have been impossible but for Britain's Technical Advances

The preparation for D-Day involved a number of little-known technical advances, without which the invasion would certainly have been a failure.

As well as the patient work of the military deception teams, who succeeded in conning the Germans into diverting hundreds of thousands of troops from the Normandy sector of the 'Atlantic Wall' to defend places the Allies had no intention of invading (successful only because of decryption of many of the Axis radio signals) earlier technical advances in Radar were essential to make the D-Day invasion possible.

We would have lost the Battle of the Atlantic in 1943, and with it the war, but for the invention of Microwave Radar at Langton Matravers in Dorset. This technical advance allowed the Fleet Air Arm to successfully locate and attack German U-Boats, forcing them to retreat from the Atlantic altogether, just when we were losing so many ships and their vital cargoes that Britain's whole war effort was in danger of collapsing.

This invention was still vital on D-Day to protect the invasion fleet from potentially devastating attacks from U-Boats.

Every one of the six thousand vessels involved in the D-Day landings was equipped with a new form of Radar-based navigation equipment – pioneering the same physical principles as modern GPS navigation systems. This allowed the ships to stick to narrow channels that had been cleared of sea mines. Without this kit, substantial numbers of vessels would have been sunk, seriously jeopardising the success of the assault.

At the same time, an adaptation of this technique was in use to allow accurate navigation of planes on missions to drop parachutists, or bomb crucial targets.

To coincide with the eightieth anniversary of D-Day, a special display will be mounted at the Langton Matravers Museum of Local History featuring surviving examples of this historic Radar equipment, including both intercept receivers and navigational equipment used on D-Day. This has been made possible by the generous loan of the exhibits by Dr Phil Judkins of the Purbeck Radar Museum Trust.

The exhibition will run from Tuesday 2nd April to Saturday 29th June 2024. For opening times please visit the website, details below.

For further information please contact Langton Matravers Museum lmhps23@gmail.com or visit the website www.langtonia.org