

News story: D-Day 75: events to mark 75th anniversary of Normandy Landings announced

Events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day in June 2019 have been announced at an event at The D-Day Story in Portsmouth.

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger announced the official commemorations during a visit to The D-Day Story in Portsmouth. The Ministry of Defence has worked with The Royal British Legion and Portsmouth City Council to organise a series of events to take place in Portsmouth and Normandy.

The centrepiece of the D-Day 75 programme will be a specially-chartered ship which will carry D-Day veterans to key commemorations in Portsmouth and Normandy in June. The ship, chartered with funds from The Royal British Legion and a LIBOR grant from HM Treasury, will offer the veterans and their carers accommodation and travel for the duration of their visit at no cost to them.

Welcoming the announcement, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

75 years ago the forces of 13 Allied countries gathered in Britain before launching the historic operation to liberate Europe. Winston Churchill rightly said that D-Day was “undoubtedly the most complicated and difficult” operation that had ever taken place. This June we will show our veterans that the debt to them is never forgotten for the price they paid for the freedom and peace we now enjoy.

The key commemoration events will include an inauguration at the site of the Normandy Memorial Trust’s British Normandy Memorial and The Royal British Legion’s services at Bayeux Cathedral and Bayeux Cemetery. The commemorations will conclude with an evening of music and entertainment for veterans beside the beaches at Arromanches.

Portsmouth, from where much of the D-Day landing force sailed in 1944, will be the focal point of the UK commemorations and will host the UK national event on 5 June 2019. Portsmouth City Council is planning a series of events over five days to reflect the area’s unique role in one of the largest and well-known military operations in history.

Cllr Gerald Vernon Jackson, Leader, Portsmouth City Council said:

This June the city will be the focal point for reflection on the events of 1944. Veterans, military personnel and civilians will

commemorate those lost and celebrate the achievements of the operation that sailed from Portsmouth 75 years ago. It's fitting that we're revealing the programme of events for D-Day 75 at The D-Day Story – the museum which has captured the human stories of those involved in that epic event.

D-Day veterans or those who would like to help a veteran attend the commemorations are asked to register with The Royal British Legion using the forms available [on their website](#).

The Royal British Legion's Commemorative Events Lead, Bob Gamble OBE, said:

As we mark 75 years since the largest seaborne invasion the world has ever seen we salute the bravery and sacrifice of all those who took part in liberating Europe. We invite those who wish to attend the events to commemorate their historic achievements to get in touch with the Legion and join our all-costs-covered journey by ship back to France. The veterans will be the VIPs at this event and we will make sure their every need is catered for as they travel back to Normandy to take part in this landmark event.

Earlier today, the Defence Secretary published [an open letter](#) to D-Day veterans inviting them to register to take part in the commemorations.