

D-Day 75 – MV Boudicca

FAQ's

Why are you doing this?

The anniversary of D-Day is an important moment for those who served to commemorate and remember their fallen comrades. This year marks 75 years since Operation Overlord, the largest amphibious operation of modern times. It became clear some months ago that there was a shortfall in available accommodation in Normandy appropriate for visitors predominantly in their 90s and, as the nation's champion of Remembrance, the Royal British Legion took the decision to charter a passenger vessel to help Normandy Veterans attend the D-Day 75 commemorations both safely and in comfort. With the support of partners, the Legion was eventually able to identify and then secure the MV Boudicca as a coordinated cross-Channel and accommodation solution. In addition, the Legion is working with a leading travel provider to offer a practicable coach transport solution in both the UK and in France.

How much is it costing the RBL?

The funding for this project comes primarily from LIBOR fines administered by HM Treasury, specifically allocated to Normandy Veterans to allow them to take part in commemorative activities on the 6th of June.

***How will you decide who gets a place on the ship?**

The capacity of the vessel allows us to take 300 Normandy veterans, each travelling with a nominated carer, to join us on a programme of events that includes the major national commemorations in both Portsmouth on 5th June 2019 and the following day in Bayeux, France. The remaining spaces on the ship will accommodate appropriate support staff including qualified medical staff, carers, guides etc. In the event that applications exceed availability, priority will be given to veterans who participated in the D-Day Landings, with the remaining spaces allocated to Normandy Veterans via a ballot. If there is no oversubscription on the closing date, then all eligible applicants will be awarded a space on the ship.

What is the exact mechanism for the selection process?

- Download the application form from our website
<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/community/d-day-75/>
- Complete and return the application to Arena Travel by Monday, 4 February 2019
- Once your application has been received and processed you will get a phone call from a Royal British Legion representative who will ask a series of questions to confirm your eligibility (see below).
- Eligible applicants will be awarded a space as per the process noted above*. The results will be confirmed by Arena Travel via post before the end of February 2019.

What is the eligibility criteria?

- All applicants must be a British national and resident, and hold a valid British passport (must be valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK).
- Priority will be given to D Day veteran applicants; defined as those who served under British command in Normandy between 6 June and 31 August 1944 during the Normandy Campaign.
- All applicants must have fought for the liberation of France during WW2.
- All applicants will be asked to provide their service details (i.e. service number, rank/employment, regiment/unit, and relevant details of service.)

Why haven't you publicised the ship sooner?

See question, *Why are we doing this?*

What if I have already paid for accommodation in Normandy?

Normandy veterans who have already paid for travel and accommodation may be eligible for a grant of up to £725 per passenger through D-Day Revisited. <https://d-dayrevisited.co.uk/libor-funding/>
Please contact D-Day Revisited for more information and current application deadlines: email info@d-dayrevisited.co.uk telephone: 01244 531 765.

While any eligible veteran can fill in an application form for a place on the ship, we cannot be responsible for any outstanding payments already made to other tour providers. Veterans and their carers should check to see whether they would be responsible for payment if they changed their plans.

How can I get a refund if I have already booked a tour or accommodation with another provider?

Refunds would need to be processed directly with the tour operator or accommodation provider through which you originally booked. Regrettably we cannot intervene in any refunds or loss of monies due to a veteran choosing to accept a place on the boat.

If I am a veteran and have been awarded a place on the boat, will I be given priority travel permissions to move around Normandy?

We are continuing to work closely with the appropriate authorities in the UK and France to ensure that the Normandy Veteran community participates fully in the D-Day 75 formal programme currently being planned by the Legion and the MoD; the HMG lead department for WW2 commemorations.

What are the dates of the voyage?

The MV Boudicca is scheduled to depart Dover on Sunday 2nd June and will return to Dover on Sunday 9th June 2019. The vessel's itinerary allows sufficient time for the on-board veterans to have appropriate levels of rest so that they can take full advantage of what we hope will be, a memorable experience for each of them.

What does the funding cover exactly?

All Normandy veterans fulfilling the eligibility criteria noted above are able to apply for a funded place on the MV Boudicca. Under the scheme, each veteran is able to bring one carer who will also be fully funded. Full details of what is included and what isn't can be found below in Annex A.

Who can accompany me?

Funding is available for **one carer to accompany the veteran** on the MV Boudicca. Carers are expected to be able bodied, fit enough to push a wheelchair if required by the veteran, support the veteran with any personal hygiene or similar needs. In the unlikely event that the veteran is hospitalised, carers would be expected to stay with the veteran even when the remainder of the group returns to the UK. Be assured that the Legion will maintain duty of care for the veteran in this instance and will remain responsible for providing full logistical support for the veteran and their carer in returning home safely.

Carer responsibilities will also include assisting the veteran during embarkation and disembarkation of the ship and coaches, assisting with muster drill on day one, and in the event of an emergency on board carers would be expected to assist the veteran in leaving the ship.

Please note that as a carer, you will be required to share a cabin with your veteran.

Can additional family members travel with me?

Spaces are available only to veterans plus one carer. Additional family members will be unable to accompany veterans even if they are able to self-fund.

What if I am unable to travel to Normandy? What other ways can I be involved?

The Royal British Legion will be working with other partners in order to hold events across the UK. This will include events at Portsmouth and the NMA. Further details will be available via our website in the New Year.

How will I be able to get to Dover?

Regional coach transfers will operate to and from Dover on the day of embarkation and disembarkation at no cost to the veteran or carer.

Can I choose to drive?

Car parking is available in Dover and it is the responsibility of the veteran or carer to arrange parking directly with the car park once the veteran has received confirmation of their place on the MV Boudicca. Car parking is not included under the terms of the funding.

What sort of cabin will I be given?

Successful applicants will be allocated a cabin on an ad-hoc basis at the discretion of The Royal British Legion. The cabins on board MV Boudicca vary in size and description however all veterans will be allocated an outside cabin with window or porthole and private facilities including either a bath or shower.

I have accessibility issues; can I request a special cabin?

There are a very small number of accessible cabins available for veterans who are either wheelchair bound or have very limited mobility. These will be allocated by ballot. Alternatively, the Legion has secured 30 purpose-built twin rooms in Caen so that the relevant veterans can participate fully in the Legion's programme of events in Normandy; these also will be allocated by ballot.

I have longstanding health issues/mobility issues; can I still apply?

Part of the application form relates to the health and mobility of each participant which must be completed truthfully and accurately to avoid being refused boarding on the day of departure. Please download, and ensure you are aware of Fred.Olsen's General Mobility Policy available on our website: rbl.org.uk/dday75

On board MV Boudicca, there is a Medical Centre which offers primary and emergency care with a doctor and nurses on call at all times.

In addition, there will be a team of medics and carers who will accompany the veterans each day throughout the programme.

I have a wheelchair/mobility aid; can I bring it on board?

Wheelchairs will not be permitted on board ship unless the veteran has been accommodated in an accessible cabin. For those not accommodated in accessible cabins, it is still possible to take a collapsible wheelchair for shore use however these will be stored and transported separately.

Mobility aids such as rollators and walking sticks will be permitted on board as long as the veteran fulfils the mobility criteria in the booking form.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

All participants require a full 10-year passport which is valid for at least 6 months after the date of return to the UK at the end of the tour. Visas are not currently required by British citizens to visit France.

Please note that in recognition of the sacrifices made by WW2 veterans, all British citizens born on or before 2nd September 1929 are eligible for a free passport. For further details, please apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport or by collecting an application form at the Post Office.

Holders of all other passports, should contact the relevant embassy for up to date passport and visa requirements.

Do I have to provide valid travel insurance?

Under the terms of the funding, insurance will be included for all veterans and carers providing they have a valid European Health Insurance Card know as an EHIC Card.

EHIC cards are free of charge for UK citizens and details of where to apply can be found on the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card#more-information>

How will leaving the EU affect the tour?

The Government website advises that a scenario in which the UK leaves the EU without agreement (a 'no deal' scenario) remains unlikely. Therefore, it is hoped a transition period will remain in place until 31 December 2020 where EU rights will remain in place – as a result the tour will not be affected. The Royal British Legion will continue to monitor the situation closely, and advise immediately should anything change.

Further details can be found below:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/passport-rules-for-travel-to-europe-after-brexit>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/travelling-to-the-eu-with-a-uk-passport-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/travelling-to-the-eu-with-a-uk-passport-if-theres-no-brexit-deal>

Annex A:

What is included in the programme?

- RBL D-Day 75 Commemoration Event at Bayeux CWGC War Cemetery on 6th June
- Participation in Commemoration Service in Portsmouth on 5th June
- Sightseeing and visits as per the itinerary
- Seven nights' board on the MV Boudicca
- Regional coach transfers on the day of embarkation and disembarkation
- All meals including Gala Dinner on the 6th June on board MV Boudicca
- Program of events on board ship
- Coach transportation in France and UK at ports of call
- Insurance with valid EHIC card
- Guides, medics and tour managers

What is not included?

- Tips and gratuities on board and ashore for crew, drivers etc
- On board services such as hairdressing, personal laundry, dry cleaning etc
- Phone calls
- Insurance and visa costs for UK citizens without a valid EHIC card
- Car parking at Dover
- Items of a personal nature
- Any items not listed above