

D-Day 44 Challenge 2025 Event Guide



**COMBAT
STRESS**
FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH



**D-DAY 44
CHALLENGE
2025**

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The D-Day 44 Challenge stretches for an astonishing 44-miles. It takes you through corn, wheat and barley fields. It hugs the Normandy coastline taking you over sand dunes, through marsh land as well as pebble beaches. You will follow forgotten paths and rocky outcrops and beautiful Norman villages.

The D-Day 44 Challenge commemorates the 1944 Allied invasion of occupied France. For those of us who are passionate about adventure and sporting challenges, the D-Day 44 Challenge offers the perfect opportunity to indulge these passions. The walk/run allows us to appreciate fully the sacrifices made by our forefathers as well as current servicemen who have bravely fought to protect our way of life. The forces present on D-Day were from many different countries, supporting the American and British and Canadian there were large numbers of Polish, French, Belgian, Dutch and Norwegian soldiers.

The D-Day Challenge was originally created by Lt Col Mike McErlain who sadly died while running on the Normandy Beaches on the 6th June 2013. The Challenge has returned due to the work of Mike's widow Jo and the challenge is now supported by the charity partner; Combat Stress.



The Challenge

Day 1: Thursday 5th June

Participants make their own way to London (Green Line Coach Station) to join the coach transfer down to Folkestone (06:30 coach departure). We then take the Eurotunnel over to Calais.

On arrival in France, it is a long drive down to Normandy where we arrive to our campsite, check in, have dinner and full event briefing about the day ahead.

Please be aware this is a long day, and we will arrive at the campsite in the evening - we are limited by the tunnel crossings and so try and sleep on the coach to ensure you are rested!

Day 2: Friday 6th June D-Day Challenge Day

*****PLEASE NOTE*** The 6th June is a busy day in Normandy and so please be patient with the team and have a flexible approach as some restrictions are beyond our control. Timings are still TBC.**

44 Mile Challenge: Early wake-up to board the coach @ 05:00 to be at the start for 05:45.

22 Mile Challenge: Morning coach transfer @ 07:00 to start point to begin walking for 07:45. *(22-mile runners will have time with the team historian before their event begins at 09:30).*



We start the 44 challenge from Pointe du Hoc, where Colonel Rudder led an elite group of 200 rangers up the chalk cliffs using ropes and ladders. After dispatching the German sentries at the top of the cliff, their mission was to find and destroy large battery guns; this action was crucial as these large guns were capable of firing shells several miles out to sea and would therefore have claimed many men's lives who would be arriving at Utah beach the following morning.

After destroying the guns, but alerting a large German infantry force, Colonel Rudder and his men fought bravely with their backs to the sea and suffered large casualties, not only at the hands of the German infantry force but also due to friendly fire coming from naval ships at sea. Colonel Rudder and 30 of his men survived the mission.

From the Pointe du Hoc, we head east with the sea on our left beating against the rocks below. Immediately the striking countryside takes hold as you run through crop fields, passing evidence of the German defensive line in the form of concrete bunkers and the occasional burnt-out WWII vehicle. As we head down towards Arromanches the 22-mile participants then begin their challenge. As we head down to the Norman village there is an incredible descent as we look out to sea. You will get fantastic views of the emotive scene of what is left of the Mulberry harbours.



These were huge sections of floating concrete roads dragged across from Britain and fastened together at Arromanches forming a temporary harbour for ships to unload their cargo in support of the soldiers who had recently landed on the beaches. Over 19 million tonnes of supplies were offloaded at the Mulberry Harbour of Arromanches.

The route then continues to Ouistreham where the course heads south along the Orne canal. Pegasus Bridge looms up ahead, its structure an icon of the first few hours of the D-Day invasion. It was here where Horsa gliders, part of the three airborne divisions deployed during the night of June 5th, landed 50 metres away from the canal bridge.

The gliders broke up on impact as they hit the field and soldiers scrambled out through the broken sides. Led by Lieutenant Brotheridge, the small platoon of commandos (the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire light infantry) charged across the bridge.

Their mission was to take it intact in order to aid the main landing force which would be arriving in the morning at Sword Beach. But by the time Brotheridge's platoon reached Pegasus Bridge, the German guards had got themselves organized enough to open fire. Brotheridge was the first casualty of D-Day after being mortally wounded from a shot through the neck. The bridge was quickly overrun with reinforcements in the form of charging Willis Jeeps fitted with Browning machine guns.

It is here at Pegasus Bridge that the epic D-Day 44 Challenge concludes. On arrival at the finish line, you will be greeted with a celebratory drink and some well earned food. Our overnight accommodation is a short walk from the finish line and participants make their own wayback.



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Day 3: Saturday 7th June

Today we board our coach for a tour of the historic D-Day sites guided by our trip historian. Tour to include the highlights of: Ranville Cemetery, Sword, Juno & Omaha Beach, American Cemetery, Arromanches and finishes at the new British Memorial.

On this day there will be time for lunch which you will buy yourself. Dinner is then back at the campsite with the group.



Day 4: Sunday 8th June

Breakfast at the campsite followed by the coach transfer back to London Victoria. Expected back into London 18:30.

Event Timings

Thursday 5 June

06:00	Registration at Green Line Coach Station, London Victoria
06:30	Coach departs London
09:00	Arrive at euro tunnel for 10:50 crossing
12:20	Arrival into Calais and begin drive to Caen
18:00	Arrival at accommodation for check in: Camping Hautes Coutures Avenue de la Côte de Nacre, 17970 Bénouville, France, Basse- Normandie
19:00	Dinner & event briefing

Friday 6 June

05:00	Transfer departs for 44-mile runners
05:45	Arrival at start for 44-mile event begins
06:45	22-mile pax meet
07:00	Transfer departs for 22-mile event (run & walk)
07:45	Arrival at start point and 22-mile walk begins
09:30	22-mile run begins (time with historian before departure)
16:00 - 18:00	Event finishes

Event Timings

Saturday 7 June

08:00	Breakfast
09:00	Coach departs
	Coach Tour
19:00	Group dinner at campsite

Sunday 8 June

07:00	Breakfast and check out
07:30	Depart
18:30	ETA back to London Victoria

Event Day Timings

Please note—if you do not make it to a checkpoint by the required time then you need to be willing to be put into a support vehicle and taken further down the course to ensure you will finish the challenge within the required time.

Cut-off times are in place to make sure that all participants are safe throughout the entire challenge and so must be taken seriously and adhered to.

	44-mile run		22-mile walk	22-mile run
Start	06:00			
Water stop 9.6mi	07:00 - 08:00			
BS1: 14.2mi Port En Bessin	08:00 – 09:15			
BS2: 22.4mi Arromanches	09:00 – 10:00	Start	07:45	09:30
BS3: 29.3mi Coursel Sur Mer	10:30 – 13:00	BS1: 6.8mi	09:00 – 10:15	10:30 – 13:00
BS4: 38.3 mi Lion Sue Mer	12:00 – 15:30	BS2: 15.8 mi	11:00 – 14:00	12:00 – 15:30
Finish: 44.5mi Pegasus Bridge	13:00 – 18:00	Finish: 22mi	13:00 – 18:00	13:00 – 18:00

You will be supported throughout the challenge by experienced event staff from Classic Challenge. The 44-mile challenge has a support runner who will be at the back of the group taking down the route marking flags. The 22-mile run has a support runner at mid-pace. The walk also has a back walker offering support.



44-mile start
Pont Du Hoc

22-mile start
Arromanches

Event Finish
Pegasus Bridge



There will be medics, and first aid trained staff along the course in addition to a medical response vehicle roaming the route.

There will also be experienced event staffing manning the break stops along the course in conjunction with Combat Stress representatives.



Kit List

Suggested Clothing for 44/22 Mile Event

- **22& 44 Mile Runners:** Trainers/trail running shoes (MUST be worn in!)
- **22 Mile Walk:** Walking boots – lightweight with ankle support (MUST be worn in!)
- Running/walking socks
- T-shirts – ideally wicking fabric
- Breathable trousers for trekking or shorts for running
- Spare trainers/flip flops to change into at finish if required
- Hat & sunglasses
- Waterproof jacket/cagoule (essential)
- Layers – fleece, thin sweatshirt

Equipment

- Passport and travel insurance plus photocopies
- **Sleeping Bag & pillow (or bedding equivalent)**
- **Towel**—there is **not** one provided at accommodation
- Telescopic walking stick or walking poles (optional for 22 mile)
- 2 x drinking water bottles or camel pack or platypus
- Small rucksack for carrying items while trekking/running e.g. water, phone, suncream, tissues, waterproof
- Zipper bags / sandwich bags: useful for documents, phone etc. to keep dry

Small personal medical kit

Long distances can be damaging to even the most experienced walkers and so please bring blister treatment with you. Our medics will be on hand to assist but you must bring your own blister treatment and plasters such as Compeed. Our stock will not cover the large size of this group and so you must come prepared.

Other medical items to bring: Antiseptic ointment, plasters, ankle and knee support, zinc oxide tape (to prevent blisters), pain killers, insect repellent, sting relief, immodium, dioralyte (or other rehydration medication), sufficient regular medication, Sun cream (minimum SPF 20-25) Lip salve (minimum SPF 20-25), Isotonic powders, Energy snacks & snacks for during the hike, antibacterial handwipes / alcohol gel, tissues.

Pack as lightly as possible, preferably in a soft, robust bag. Participants should take a photocopy of their passport and travel insurance cover

This list is not exhaustive and also some items may not be required during the trip.

Combat Stress – About Us

Combat Stress is the UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health. For over a century we have been helping former servicemen and women deal with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. Today we provide specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues.

Your support is vital. With current funding, we can only help some of those who turn to us. By being here today, you are making a difference – **thank you for standing with us.**



The Impact of your Fundraising

£24 could pay for a veteran to attend a Peer Support group meeting

£30 could fund a veteran's call to our 24-hour Helpline

£58 could allow veteran family members to use our Family Support Service

£82 could fund a 1:1 session on sensory modulation with an occupational therapist

£179 could fund a specialist psychological assessment for a veteran

£379 could pay for a veteran's appointment with a psychiatrist

£535 could enable a veteran with complex PTSD to recognise, understand and use their emotions to live the life they want by completing our 'master your emotions' programme



Thank you so much for choosing to take on our D-Day 44 Challenge. If you have any questions or want to talk to the team, please email challenges@combatstress.org.uk or call 01372 587140