

# D-DAY 44 CHALLENGE 2027

## Event Guide



5 - 8 June 2027

Combat Stress 24-hour Helpline 0800 138 1619

## D-Day 44 Challenge 2027

The D-Day 44 Challenge is a 44-mile route across Normandy, taking in farmland, coastal paths, sand dunes, marshes, and historic villages. Participants follow rugged terrain and lesser-known trails along the same landscape shaped by history.

The event commemorates the 1944 Allied invasion of occupied France, honoring the sacrifices of those who served from across the Allied nations. It offers a meaningful challenge for those drawn to endurance events with historical significance.

Originally created by Lt Col Mike McErlain, who died while running on the Normandy beaches on 6 June 2013, the challenge continues today through the efforts of his widow, Jo, and is now organized by Combat Stress.



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The 44 Challenge begins at Pointe du Hoc, where Colonel Rudder led 200 U.S. Rangers up the cliffs to destroy German gun batteries that threatened the Allied landings at Utah Beach. After completing their mission, they came under heavy counterattack and suffered significant casualties. Only Colonel Rudder and around 30 men survived.

From Pointe du Hoc, the route heads east with the sea on your left. The course passes through open countryside and farmland, with visible reminders of the German defensive lines, including concrete bunkers and scattered WWII remains.

Approaching Arromanches, 22-mile participants join the route. The descent into the village offers sweeping coastal views and a striking perspective over the remains of the Mulberry Harbours.

The Mulberry Harbours were temporary floating structures, towed from Britain and assembled at Arromanches to allow ships to unload supplies for the Allied forces. More than 19 million tonnes of equipment and materials were landed here in support of the troops.



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The route continues to Ouistreham before turning south along the Orne Canal towards Pegasus Bridge—one of the key objectives in the opening hours of D-Day. Just after midnight on 6 June 1944, Horsa gliders landed nearby, carrying airborne troops tasked with capturing the bridge intact.

On landing, the soldiers quickly regrouped and advanced under fire. Led by Lieutenant Brotheridge, they charged the bridge but met resistance from German defenders. Brotheridge was fatally wounded, becoming one of the first Allied casualties of D-Day. The position was soon secured with additional reinforcements arriving.

The D-Day 44 Challenge finishes at Pegasus Bridge. At the finish line, participants are welcomed with a celebratory drink and food. Overnight accommodation is a short walk away.



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# The Challenge

## Day 1: Saturday 5th June 2027

Participants make their own way to London (Green Line Coach Station) to join the coach transfer to Folkestone, before crossing to Calais via the Eurotunnel.

On arrival in France, we continue to Normandy, where we check in at the campsite and have a group dinner which will include a full event briefing.

## Day 2: Sunday 6th June 2027

The 6th June is a busy day in Normandy and whilst we plan effectively, some restrictions are beyond our control. If we do need to make changes on the day, please be patient with the team.

**44-mile challenge:** Early wake-up to board the coach at 04:45 and be at the start for 05:45.

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



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### Day 3: Monday 7th June 2027

Today we board the coach for a guided tour of key D-Day sites, led by our trip historian. The itinerary is to be confirmed but may include Ranville Cemetery, Sword, Juno and Omaha Beaches, the American Cemetery, Arromanches, and the British Memorial.

There will be time during the day to purchase lunch. In the evening, we return to the campsite for dinner with the group



### Day 4: Tuesday 8th June 2027

After breakfast at the campsite, we board the coach for the return journey to London Victoria. Expected arrival is around 18:30.

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## Event Timings

### Saturday 05 June 2027

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| TBC   | Registration at Green Line Coach Station, London Victoria   |
| TBC   | Coach departs London  |
| TBC   | Arrive at euro tunnel for 10:50 crossing  |
| TBC   | Arrival into Calais and begin drive to Caen   |
| TBC   | Arrival at accommodation for check in:<br><b>Camping Hautes Coutures Avenue de la Côte de Nacre,<br/>17970 Bénouville, France, Basse- Normandie</b> |
| 19:00 | Dinner & event briefing   |

### Sunday 06 June 2027

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 04:45            | 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 -<br>18:00 | Event finishes  |

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## Break stops and cut-off times

Please note that if you're unable to reach a checkpoint within the set time, our team may ask you to use a support vehicle, which will take you further down the course where you can rejoin the challenge to finish within the required time.

**Cut-off times are in place to keep everyone safe and ensure the event runs smoothly, so we kindly ask that they are followed throughout.**

You will be supported throughout the challenge by experienced event staff from Classic Challenge. The 44-mile run will include a support runner who will be at the back of the group. The 22-mile walk will also have a back walker offering support.

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

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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.

### Monday 07 June 2027

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

### Tuesday 08 June 2027

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

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# Kit List

## Suggested Clothing

- **22 & 44-mile runners:** Trainers/trail running shoes
- **22-mile walk:** Walking boots – lightweight with ankle support
- 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 suggested 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.

Please bring your own sports gels and supplements that you have trained with.

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## 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 taking part in this challenge, you are making a difference – **thank you for standing with us.**



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# The Impact of your fundraising

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

**£57** could fund a veteran's call to our 24-hour Helpline

**£75** could allow veteran family members to use our Family Support Service

**£89** could fund a 1:1 session on sensory modulation with an occupational therapist

**£173** could fund a specialist psychological assessment for a veteran

**£360** could pay for a veteran's appointment with a psychiatrist



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](mailto:challenges@combatstress.org.uk) or call 01372 587140

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