

# PRESS KIT

# 2024

80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
D-DAY & BATTLE  
OF NORMANDY

**NORMANDY**   
TOURISM



# editorial

## 1944 - 2024: 80 years on...

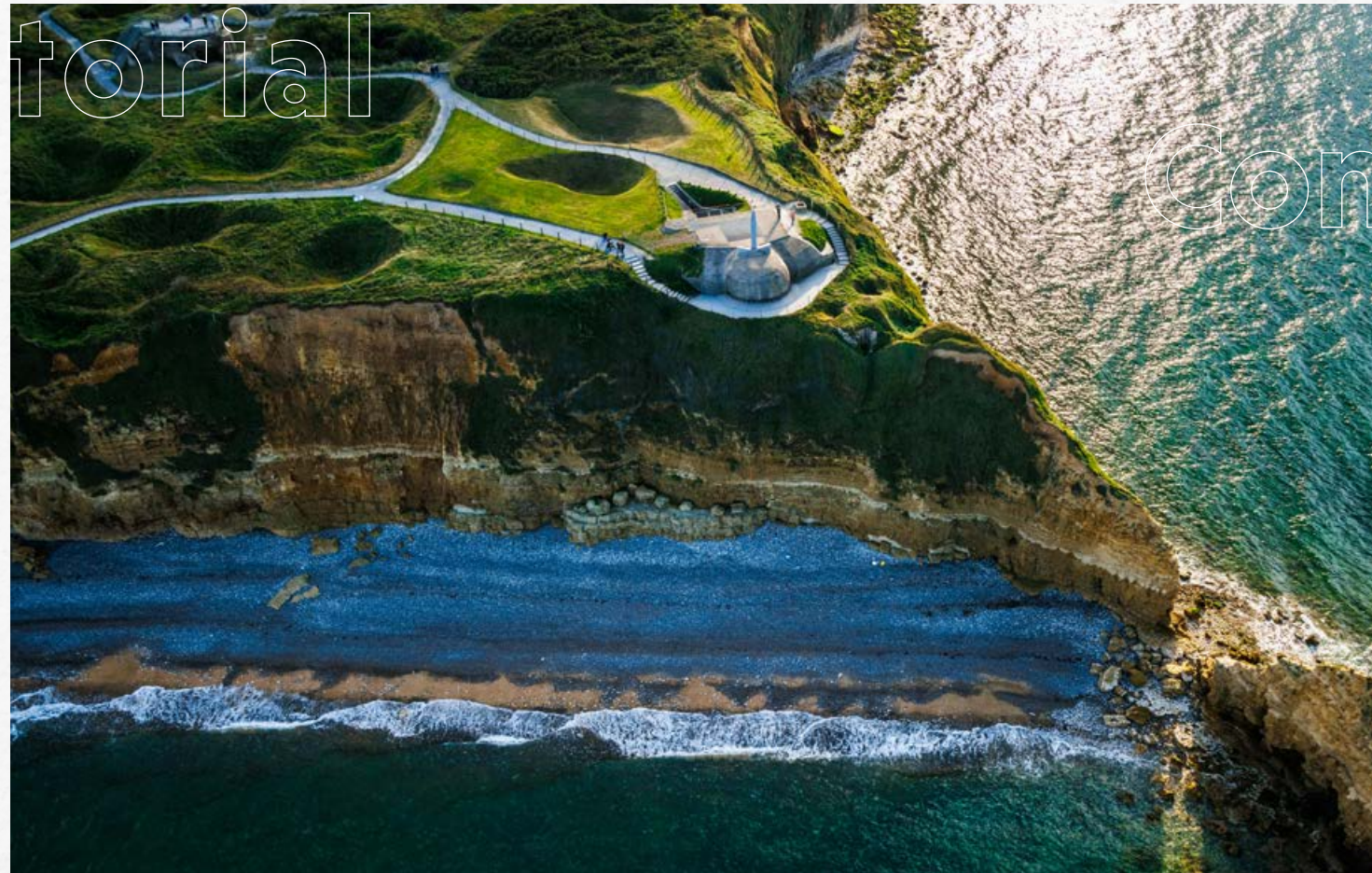
*On 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, and during the long summer which followed, brave young men from the world over came to fight in Normandy to defeat Nazism and to re-establish Freedom. D-Day was and remains the largest combined land, air and naval operation in history.*

*Normandy will forever bear the scars of the Landings and the Battle of Normandy that led to the liberation of France and Europe. 2024 marks the 80th Anniversary of this historic event, and with it, a momentous occasion to celebrate peace, liberty and reconciliation.*

*A regional mobilisation will take place to commemorate this major ten-year anniversary, with a rich and unprecedented programme of events to bring the memory of this tragic period of world history to life, all while emphasising the spirit of hope. Normandy will pay tribute to the fallen and to the veterans who will come to attend the commemorative events and celebrations, many for the very last time.*

*It will be the perfect occasion for visitors to discover, or rediscover, the main memorial sites, the cemeteries, the key places and the museums which bear witness to this tragic period of time. Our hope is that these visits will be an opportunity to reflect and to remember, along with a special moment for visitors to share as a family with the younger generation.*

*Lest we forget*



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## A Glimpse into History

The strength and logistics deployed by the Americans for the D-Day Landing underscore their essential and central role in Operation Overlord. On the night of June 5-6, 1944, the 82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Divisions were parachuted near Sainte-Mère-Église, Beuzeville, and Pont l'Abbé. General Bradley's 1<sup>st</sup> American Army landed on the beaches of Utah and Omaha, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion stormed Pointe du Hoc. At 6:35 AM on June 6, 1944, 90% of the soldiers in the first assault wave fell under enemy fire. The second assault wave faced intense gunfire on the beach.

A thousand GIs lost their lives that morning on 'Bloody Omaha.' The Omaha Beach landing sector covered the beaches of Vierville-sur-Mer, Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, and Colleville-sur-Mer, entrusted to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions of General Gerow's U.S. Fifth Corps, which suffered staggering losses. In total, on this beach, there were 3,000 killed and seriously wounded Americans on June 6.

After the war, General Bradley declared, 'Anyone who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero'.



## The International Ceremony

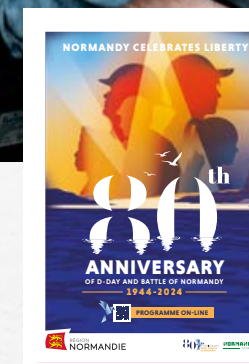
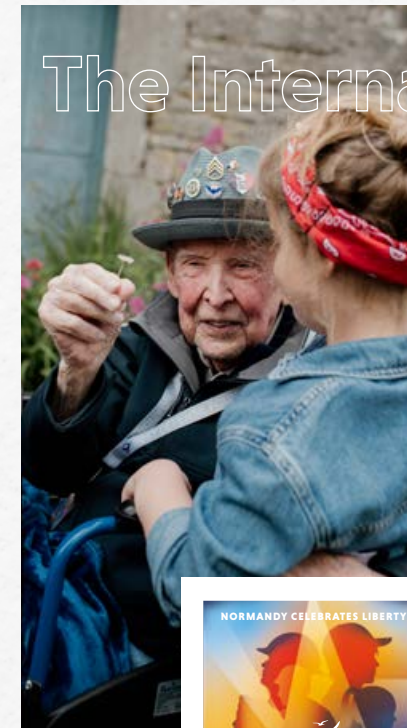
### The Site of the Ceremony

Nestled in the heart of the Omaha Beach sector, the village of Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, alongside Colleville-sur-Mer and Vierville-sur-Mer, stands as one of the three communities lining the shores of 'Bloody' Omaha Beach. The Signal monument, unveiled on June 6, 1957, and situated along the waterfront, is part of a series of akin monuments sharing the same title, strategically positioned in the municipalities where the historic 1944 D-Day Landing unfolded.



**2024** will undoubtedly mark the last grand anniversary of D-Day in the presence of veterans, the last direct witnesses of history. Exclusive through invitation only, the international ceremony for the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landing and the Battle of Normandy will take place on June 6, 2024, in Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, on the Omaha Beach sector.

The details of the ceremony and practical information will be made available soon.





## Official Ceremonies

The entire Normandy Region will come together to pay tribute to the memory of those, be they soldiers or civilians, who fought for peace. Nearly a hundred commemorative and community events will mark this occasion, taking place on the very sites where the battles occurred. Festivities will kick off in March and extend through October.

For a complete list of event dates,

visit: [80e-normandie.fr](https://80e-normandie.fr)

## Normandy Region designated Events

To curate a calendar of activities bringing vibrancy to the whole territory of Normandy throughout this commemorative year, the Normandy Region has undertaken the labelling of several hundred events spanning from March 1 to October 15, 2024. These include a breathtaking coastline illumination with synchronized fireworks at key D-Day sites, a massive picnic on Omaha Beach, Liberation-themed dances, an international parachute drop involving hundreds of military personnel above Sainte-Mère-Église, and more. The festivities will unfold throughout the year, with a particular focus on the warmer months. This initiative serves as a wonderful opportunity to unite in the spirit of fraternity.

Discover the labeled events on an [interactive map](#)



### D-Day Festival Normandy

Running from June 1 to June 16, 2024, the D-Day Festival unfolds along the full coastal expanse of the D-Day Landing and the Battle of Normandy, stretching from Pegasus Bridge to Sainte-Mère-Église, encompassing key locations such as Ouistreham, Arromanches-les-Bains, Pointe du Hoc, and, notably, the five iconic sectors: Utah Beach, Omaha Beach, Gold Beach, Juno Beach, and Sword Beach. The festival encompasses a diverse range of events, including concerts, parades, exhibitions, fireworks, parachute displays, screenings, and historical reenactments—nearly a hundred manifestations in total, all in celebration of Freedom!



6<sup>th</sup> edition  
**Freedom prize ceremony**

JUNE 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at CAEN ZENITH

The Freedom Prize is an educational program aimed at raising awareness about freedom, peace, and human rights, rooted in the values embodied by the Normandy Landings on June 6, 1944. The Freedom Prize invites young people aged between 15 to 25 years old from France and around the world to choose an inspiring person or organisation, committed to an exemplary fight for freedom. The distinctive feature of this initiative lies in involving youth at every stage, from proposals submitted to the international jury to the final designation of the laureate. Initiated by the Normandy Region, implemented in collaboration with the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace, in close partnership with the Academic Authorities of Normandy and the Canopé network, the Freedom Prize pays tribute to all those who have fought and continue to fight for this ideal.



## The landings of Provence

2024 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landings and battle of Provence. Operation Dragoon was launched 70 days after the Normandy landings. The operation involved both a naval and an air assault. Although the German troops had expected an imminent landing, they were unaware of the date and were surprised on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of August.

Provence was liberated in less than two weeks whereas the estimated duration of the operation was two months. In total, Operation Dragoon mobilised 900,000 men and lasted more than three months. In commemoration of these events, the Var department launched its project 'The Landing and Liberation Route', emphasizing the importance of remembrance for both past and future generations.

## June 6, 1944

June 6, 1944, remains etched in every memory as the day of the Allied landing on the beaches of Normandy. It stands as the most spectacular phase of Operation Overlord, initiating the liberation of Western Europe from German occupation. The significance of that day resonates with the profound journey towards freedom.

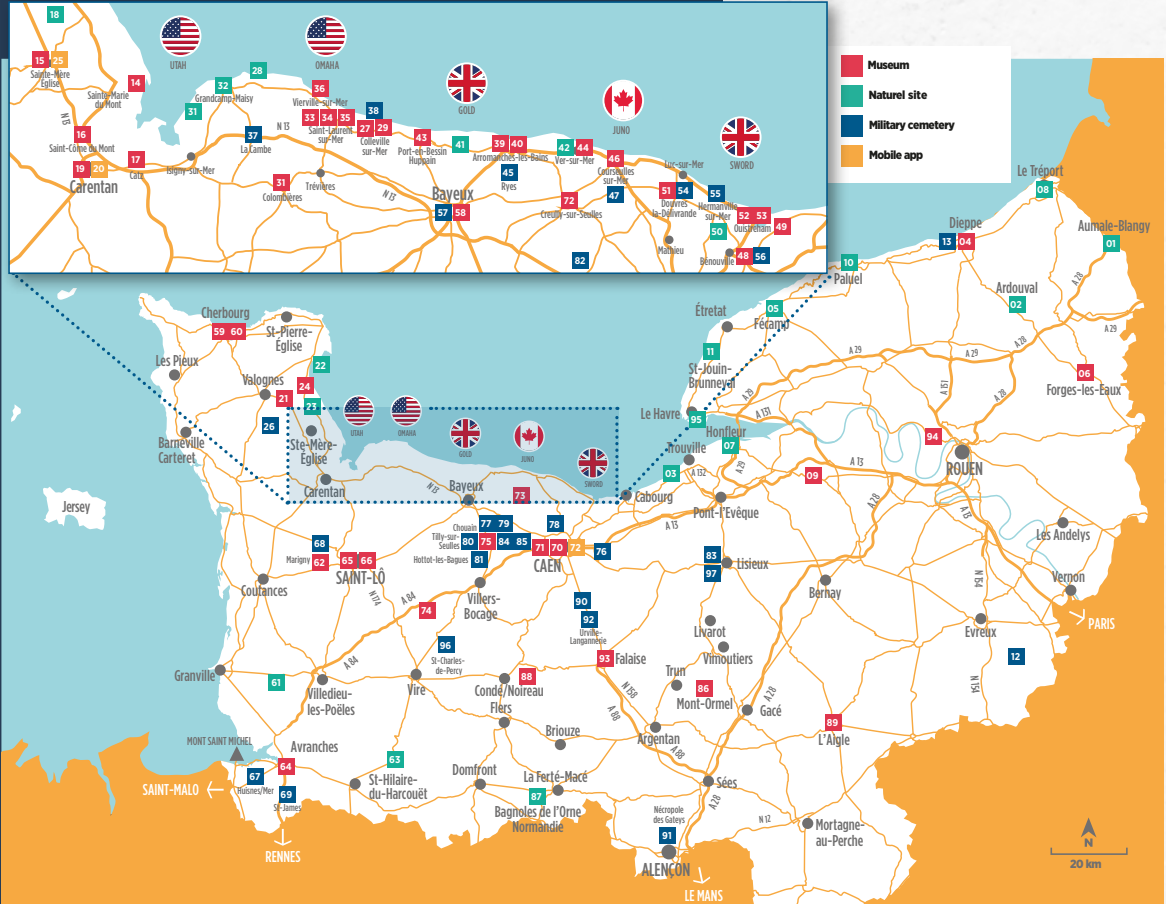
## Liberation route europe

The history of the liberation of Western Europe comprises numerous chapters, some of which unfold before the onset of the war in 1939, while others often extend years beyond the conflict's conclusion in 1945. The 'Liberation Route Europe' is a transnational memorial trail connecting WWII remembrance sites and stories across Europe retracing the steps of Allied soldiers.

Normandy, land of freedom

MAP OF THE D-DAY LANDINGS AND THE BATTLE OF NORMANDY

The region of Normandy forever bears the echoes of this history. For 80 years, it holds in remembrance and pays tribute to the men who sacrificed their lives there, many of whom now find eternal rest in its soil.



Map Museums, natural sites and military cemeteries

THE ALLIES PREPARE FOR D-DAY

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- 03 Batteries du Mont Canisy
- 04 Mémorial du 19 août 1942
- 05 Blockaus du Cap Fagnet
- 06 Normandy Resistance Museum
- 07 Le Blockhaus de la Gare
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UTAH BEACH SAINTE-MÈRE-ÉGLISE CARENTAN

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Normandy, Land of Freedom

REMEMBRANCE AND LEGACY



Step back in time at the Airborne Museum



> Sainte-Mère-Église

2024 is set to be a significant year. Not only will it mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day, but also the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Airborne Museum. During the commemorations of June 2024, the museum will unveil the outcome of the Airborne 1964-2024 project. New additions will be open to the public from May 8, 2024. The 2024 edition of the Airborne Museum's Camp Geronimo, its military reenactment camp, will welcome visitors from June 1 to June 9, 2024.

New Faces of Canada Today Hall at Juno Beach Centre

> Courseulles-sur-Mer

The Juno Beach Centre is undertaking a major renewal of its Faces of Canada Today permanent exhibition space for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. This renewal of the scenography and content reflects a significant shift in the culture of remembrance in Canada since the Second World War. It notably invites visitors to explore topics covering the military engagement of Canadians. A final room in the permanent exhibition encourages reflection and contemplation.

Map

Normandy



## Get ready for an immersive journey at the D-Day Landing Museum

### > Arromanches-les-Bains

Across seven captivating sequences, the D-Day Landing Museum, known locally as the 'Musée du Débarquement, Arromanches', focuses on the astounding pieces of engineering of American and British artificial ports and their pivotal roles. This year, an exciting eighth sequence awaits as the museum unveils its rooftop terrace for exploration.

## Outdoor Activity in a symbolic Location

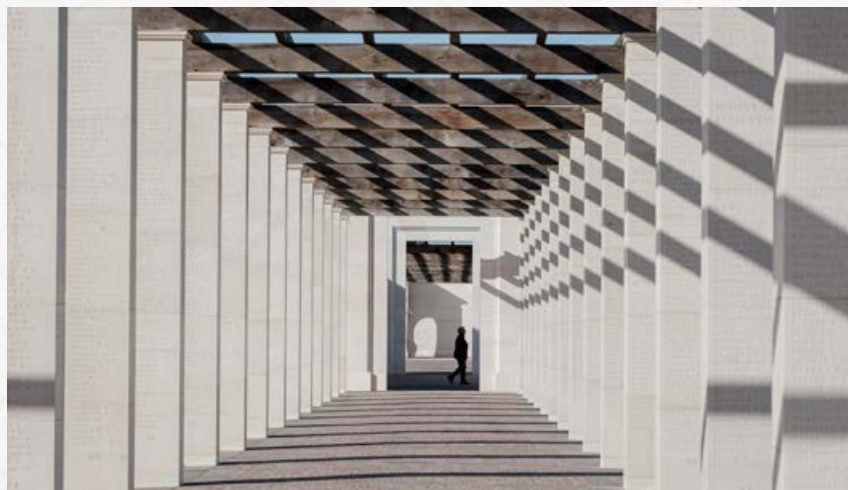
### > Courseulles-sur-Mer

Experience Juno Caching, a free and accessible game blending memory and biodiversity within Parc Juno, the historic site of the June 6, 1944, clashes. This 10-step quest guides you through the remnants of the German defence system that once composed the impressive Atlantic Wall.

## Special events programme at the Caen Memorial

### > Caen

The Caen Memorial is unveiling an exciting lineup of exhibitions, featuring a new hall dedicated to our neighbours across the channel, 'Britain Alone Against Hitler.' The focus then shifts to America with 'The Dawn of the American Century, 1919-1944.' This impactful exhibition aims at shedding light on the origins of the American soldiers who landed on June 6, 1944.



## The Montormel Memorial

### > O Poche de Falaise-Chambois

Download the interactive application 'Les 3 Jours d'Agata' (Agata's 3 Days) on your smartphone to immerse in the final battle of Normandy. Agata, a young British woman of Polish origin, retraces the footsteps of her grandfather, a former soldier. Follow her on a geo-located family-friendly car tour, exploring the key locations of the last confrontations.

## D-Day Experience: A 3D and 4D Journey into History

### > Saint-Côme-du-Mont

At D-Day Experience, visitors step into a new dimension. The cinema, equipped with 3D digital technology, facilitates participation in the events of D-Day through a 36-minute documentary. The legendary journey can also be experienced aboard an authentic 1943 C-47 airplane, offering a one-of-a-kind flight simulation.

## D-Day unveiled to children

### > Courseulles-sur-Mer

Immerse your young adventurers in an interactive experience starting at the base of the Cross of Lorraine. Corine Vervaeke's narrative not only recounts the historical events of June 6, 1944, but also explores the daily lives of the youngest soldiers who landed on an unknown beach at the break of dawn. The young "protagonists" of this D-Day experience at Juno Beach will leave this adventure eager to delve further into the story of the Allies' triumphant victory!



## Exhibition at the Juno Beach Centre

### > Courseulles-sur-Mer

Starting from March 1, 2024, in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), the Juno Beach Centre unveils a new commemorative exhibition titled 'Rising to the Challenge: RCAF During World War II.' This eco-designed exhibition, created collaboratively by the Juno Beach Centre team in France and Canada, showcases collections and testimonials.

## Musée N°4 Commando

### > Ouistreham Riva-Bella

Established by British and French veterans along with their families, the museum sheds light on the lesser-known story of French fighters who, through the tenacity of Commander Philippe Kieffer, managed to join British commandos. In total, 177 commandos played a crucial role in the Battle of Normandy and the liberation of the city. Leon Gauthier, the last veteran of this elite commando, passed away in July 2023.



## La Pointe du Hoc

### > Cricqueville-en-Bessin

An awe-inspiring natural landmark along the Normandy coast, Pointe du Hoc boasts sheer cliffs that soar up to 35 meters in certain areas. Strategically selected by the Germans, this site served as a stronghold for a impressive battery of cannons. The gripping tale of its capture by American Rangers has become a legendary chapter in the history of the D-Day landings, showcasing the courage and resilience of those who played a pivotal role in this historic event.

## Josephine Baker, Icon of Humanity and Freedom

### > Caen

The Abbey of Men is more than just a heritage site; it also carries the essence of culture. Between June and October 2024, an exhibition dedicated to Josephine Baker is set to grace the halls of the Scriptorium at Caen's City Hall. This exhibit will showcase around forty photographs from the pages of Paris Match magazine. A French Resistance fighter of American descent and a globally acclaimed music hall artist, she made history by becoming the First Black Woman Inducted in the Panthéon in 2021, France's Tomb of Heroes.



NORMANDY  
EXPERIENCES

## Sea Kayaking amid iconic D-Day Landmarks

### > Asnelles

Calling all water sports enthusiasts and history lovers! Brace yourselves for an adrenaline-packed expedition from the Asnelles Nautical Centre. Embark on a sea kayaking journey along the iconic Mulberry Harbour Phoenix caissons. In a matter of minutes, you'll find yourself face to face with these 80-year-old relics. Get ready for a thrilling and immersive experience!

NORMANDY  
EXPERIENCES

## Omaha Beach Adventure on a Fat Bike

### > Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer

Against the backdrop of the sandy D-Day beaches and the distant view of the artificial port of Arromanches, join an unforgettable biking adventure exploring historical landscapes. Follow the trail to the Wn 73 and Wn 65 bunkers. As your guided journey unfolds, make your way to the Wn 62 bunker overlooking the beach. This enigmatic location bears German markings in the shape of 'S' on the walls, where you can appreciate snippets of film footage from June 6, 1944, rounding off this informative excursion.

## Thrilling Water Adventures on an Iconic Beach

### > Colleville-sur-Mer

Immerse yourself in the exhilarating embrace of nature and sea spray with Eolia Normandie as you embark on an action-packed exploration of Omaha Beach! Feel the rush of land sailing, catamaran adventures, sea kayaking, or paddleboarding - a dynamic connection with history! After an adrenaline-fueled experience, recharge at the Club House overlooking the sea, where a vibrant array of activities awaits year-round.

## A playful and educational approach to discovering the D-Day

### > Carentan-les-Maraais

Embark on an interactive adventure with this unique escape game experience! Three intricately designed rooms have been curated to provide an immersive journey through key historical events, with a special focus on the D-Day landing and the Battle of Normandy.

# Experiences

## Caen you Escape - Operation K-723

### > Caen

On June 6, 1944, the Allied forces secured their foothold, facing challenges as they pushed inland through the Normandy countryside. Fierce battles, intensified bombings and sabotage operations unfolded. The liberation of the city of Caen, a strategic communication hub before Cherbourg, seemed imminent. Your group has been tasked with a mission to intervene in a highly strategic and feared location: the Kommandantur 723. Step into the hardship of this historical context as your team navigates through the immersive escape game scenario.







### American Military Cemetery > Colleville-sur-Mer

Nestled in the heart of the Normandy landing beaches, the American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer overlooks the shores of Omaha Beach. A must-visit during your exploration of the Normandy beaches, it is a poignant resting place for 9,387 soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The chapel, memorial, and Garden of the Missing stand in solemn tribute. The Visitor Centre honours these soldiers and their courage in executing Operation Overlord, paving the way for the liberation of Europe. Access to the centre is free, providing a profound opportunity to reflect on the immense contributions of these brave individuals.

### The Canadian Military Cemetery > Beny-sur-Mer

The cemetery holds the final resting place for 335 soldiers from the 3rd Canadian Division who landed on June 6, 1944, in the Juno Beach sector. The majority of these soldiers were buried after losing their lives in June and early July 1944 during the Battle of Caen and on D-Day. Additionally, Canadian prisoners of war executed by the SS-Panzer Hitlerjugend at the Abbey of Ardenne are also interred here. In total, there are 2,049 graves, including 1,694 Canadian soldiers, 15 airmen, 3 British soldiers, and 1 French soldier.

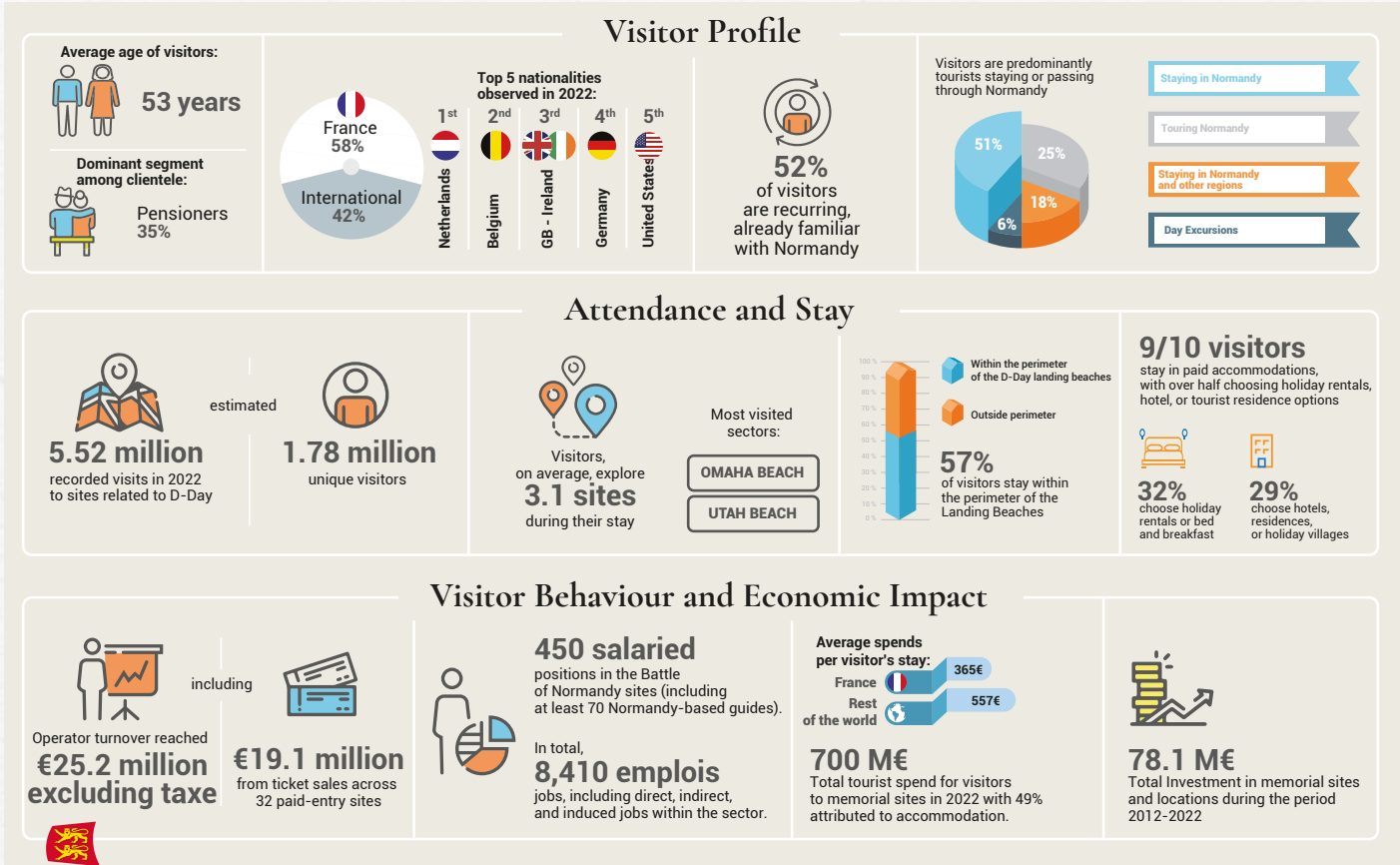
### The British Normandy Memorial > Ver-sur-Mer

Perched atop Mont Fleury, overlooking the expanse of Gold Beach, the British Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer beckons to reflection and remembrance of the 22,442 soldiers of the British Army, their names etched onto 160 columns of Burgundy stone. It also pays tribute to the members of the merchant navy and civilians who fell on Normandy soil from June 6 to August 31, 1944.

### The German Military Cemetery > La Cambe

Managed and maintained by the VOLKS BUND (German War Graves Commission), the cemetery is the resting place for more than 21,200 German soldiers. 1,220 maple trees have been planted symbolizing life and embodying the ideals of peace and reconciliation among nations.

## Key Figures of Remembrance Tourism





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