



Liberation
Route
Europe

TOUR & TRAVEL GUIDE
**UK & THE CHANNEL
ISLANDS**

Preparation for D-Day

D-Day is one of the most remembered campaigns of the Second World War. The operation involved troops from Britain, the United States, Canada and several other countries.

On 6 June 1944, the Allied forces sailed across the English Channel to begin their campaign to gain victory against the German army. Planning the invasion was an enormous undertaking.

Often overlooked, planning the invasion (codenamed Operation Overlord) was a mammoth task. A vast army of workers

toiled on various elements of the campaign, from providing safe harbours for the travelling fleet to ensuring that fuel would be in plentiful supply. An array of sites linked to the planning, preparation and implementation of D-Day are located across Britain.



Eisenhower talking to his troops



Map showing disembarkation and embarkation points for the D-Day landings



Ecstatic crowds greet British Officers from the Liberating British Force. ©Guernsey Museum

The Channel Islands, from occupation to liberation

When it became clear that the Islands would be occupied, the population faced the traumatic decision to leave their homes and move to England, divide their family by evacuating only their children or to remain together living under German rule.

Those choosing to remain experienced five hard and hungry years living under stifling rules and regulations. Almost half of the resident population of Guernsey remained on the Island during the German occupation; four fifths of children and 12,000 adults had been evacuated at short notice prior to the bombing of St. Peter Port harbour by German forces on 28 June 1940. Around 6,000 of the 47,000 inhabitants of Jersey fled. Conversely, virtually all residents of Alderney were evacuated and the occupying forces arrived to an almost uninhabited Island. In contrast, no Sark residents left the Island. One family lived on Herm Island and Lihou was abandoned.

Mainly used for hunting and training exercises, these smaller Islands remained largely unoccupied by German forces. The Islands were liberated by Allied Force 135 on the 9 & 10 May 1945. While the liberation was achieved without armed conflict, sadly both British and German soldiers lost their lives clearing mines. The effects of the occupation were far reaching. Food shortages had emaciated the inhabitants of the Islands and German fortifications dotted the landscape. Many evacuated children suffered an inability to re-connect with their families, which would linger throughout their lives.



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Key events & commemorations

27th
of January
Holocaust
Memorial Day

8th
of May
Victory in Europe
Day (VE-Day)

9th
of May
Liberation Day
(Channel Islands)

11th
of November
Remembrance Day

History



VE-Day Prime Minister Winston Churchill gives the V for Victory sign.

United Kingdom

Great Britain played a key role in the resistance against Germany and its final defeat. After the defeat of France in 1940, UK was left to face Nazi Germany on its own until the United States and the Soviet Union entered the war. British forces fought on almost all fronts while the civilians endured attacks by the German Air Force and later by the V-weapons. In 1944, Great Britain also became the staging ground for the Allied invasion of Western Europe.

The Channel Islands

The self-governing British Crown Dependencies of Jersey and Guernsey were the only parts of the British Isles to be occupied by Nazi Germany. From June 1940 onwards, they were turned into fortresses, guarding the French coast against Allied attacks, with several coastal batteries and numerous bunkers. The Allied blockade, imposed on the islands following the win of the Battle of Normandy, resulted in considerable privations for the civilians that were not evacuated and relief only came after the surrender of Nazi Germany.

Operation Fortitude

ONE OF THE WAR'S GREATEST DECEPTION OPERATIONS



Dummy aircraft as part of Operation Fortitude

As D-Day approached, Kent became the stage for one of the War's greatest deception plans, Operation Fortitude South. In order to mislead the German army and conceal the real location of the Allied invasion of Western Europe, extensive military preparations were made around Dover. But it was all fake.

Operation Fortitude sought to mislead the German army and conceal the real location of the foreseen Allied invasion of Normandy (June 1944). Operation Fortitude North was designed to give the impression of an impending Allied invasion of Norway, while Operation Fortitude South was to develop a mock invasion at Pas-de-Calais, all working to divert German troops away from Normandy. For the German troops, Pas-de-Calais looked to be the obvious place for an Allied invasion into Europe, offering the shortest route across the Channel. A fictitious 1st U.S. Army Group (FUSAG) was placed in Kent, supported by the construction of roads, bridges, buildings, airfields and embarkation points where dummy airplanes and landing crafts were stationed. Even false radio transmissions were made.

A decrypted transmission from the Japanese Ambassador to his government, recounting a conversation with Hitler, revealed that the German troops indeed expected an Allied invasion via the Straits of Dover. On 5 June 1944, a mock invasion was launched from Dover, while the real invasion on 6 June, Operation Overlord, successfully delivered 185,000 troops across to Normandy. Even long after the Normandy landings, Adolf Hitler retained his best troops in Pas-de-Calais, expecting an even larger invasion at a later date.

The 'Friendly Invasion'

Quickly following the United States' entrance into the Second World War in December 1941, hundreds of thousands of American troops crossed the Atlantic to the UK to assist with the war effort in Europe. They remained in large numbers throughout the rest of the war from 1942 to 1945. This event became known as the 'Friendly Invasion'.

The American servicemen stationed in various villages and cities throughout the UK had a profound impact on British culture. They introduced popular American music and dances such as the jitterbug to Great Britain. In addition, iconic American food appeared in Britain for the first time



such as peanut butter, chewing gum, donuts and Coca Cola. British families often opened their homes to the American servicemen for tea and meals. The Americans brought gifts such as chocolate, candy, cigarettes, and nylon stockings – items in short supply due to rations. Many American camps held dances open to the public with many British girls as the special guests. American servicemen would often spend their free time in many of the cinemas, cafes, restaurants and pubs, cultivating friendly relationships that often turned into romantic ones. This resulted in a great number of wartime marriages. Many of the British girlfriends emigrated to the US at the end of the war...



Racial segregation.

The Americans also brought their oppressive system of racial segregation with them. White and African American servicemen served in separate units, and spent their free time apart. Certain British towns were designated by the U.S. military as only for black or white soldiers, while others alternated certain days for each race. Many interracial relationships between black American servicemen and their white British girlfriends ended in tears. Families were often separated as interracial marriage remained illegal in many American states in the years following the war. By the end of the war, the American – British cultural relationship was largely strengthened thanks to the 'Friendly Invasion'. The images above capture the friendship that grew between the Americans soldiers and British civilians during these three years.

Important sites across the country



1 International Bomber Command Centre
LINCOLN – internationalbcc.co.uk



2 Bletchley Park
MILTON KEYNES – bletchleypark.org.uk



3 Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial
MADINGLEY – abmc.gov/Cambridge



4 IWM Duxford
DUXFORD – iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-duxford



5 Imperial War Museum
LONDON – iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-london



6 Dover Castle
DOVER – english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle

The Channel Islands, from occupation to liberation



1 Alderney Harbour & Museum
ALDERNEY ISLAND – alderneysociety.org/museum



2 The German Occupation Museum
LES HOUARDS FOREST, GUERNSEY – germanoccupationmuseum.co.uk



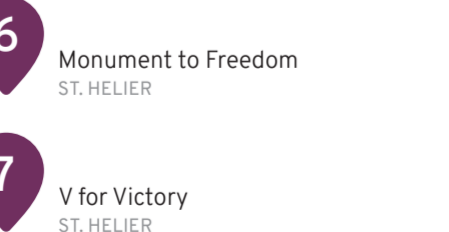
4 Castle Cornet
ST. PETER PORT, GUERNSEY – museums.gov.gg/CastleCornet



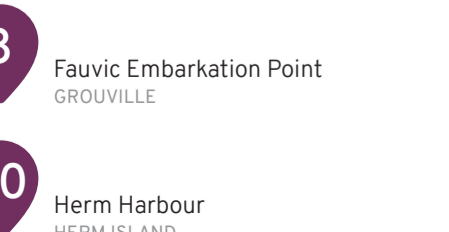
3 Elizabeth Castle
ST. HELIER – jerseyheritage.org/places-to-visit/elizabeth-castle



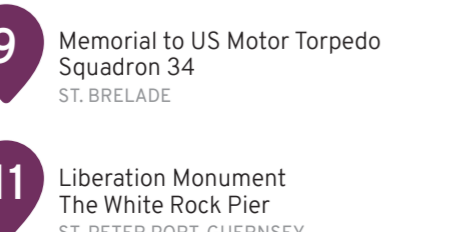
5 Mill Lane and La Seigneurie
LA SEIGNEURIE, SARK ISLAND – laseigneuriegardens.com



6 Monument to Freedom
ST. HELIER



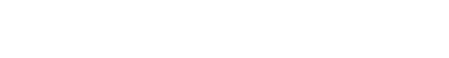
8 Fauvic Embarkation Point
GROUVILLE



9 Memorial to US Motor Torpedo Squadron 34
ST. BRELADE



10 Herm Harbour
HERM ISLAND



11 Liberation Monument
The White Rock Pier
ST. PETER PORT, GUERNSEY

Preparation for D-Day



1 Churchill War Rooms
LONDON – iwm.org.uk/visits/churchill-war-rooms



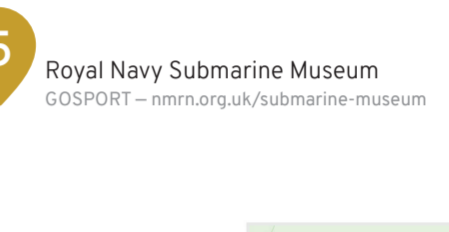
2 The D-Day Story
PORTSMOUTH – theddaystory.com



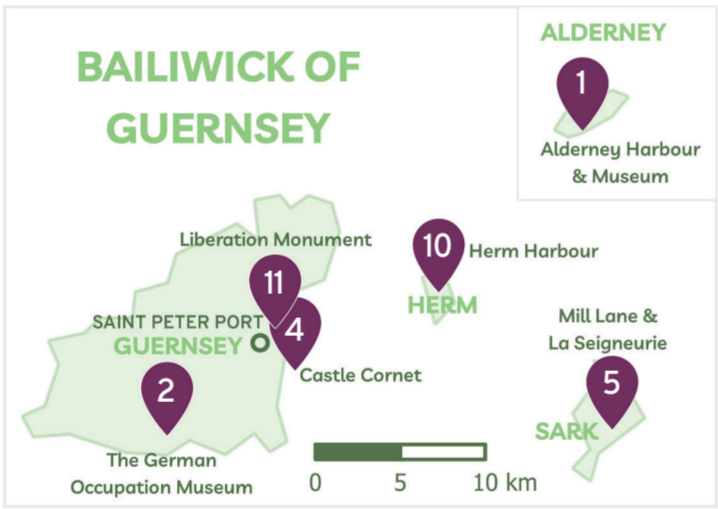
3 Maritime Museum
ST. HELIER – jerseyheritage.org/places-to-visit/maritime-museum



4 Allied naval headquarters, Southwick House
FAREHAM – Admission by email DSPG-HQ-Information@mod.uk



5 Royal Navy Submarine Museum
GOSPORT – nmrn.org.uk/submarine-museum



Capital

City

Hiking Trail

River

