



May 31, 2019 16:46 BST

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' 'Boudicca' wears its poppies with pride on The Royal British Legion's 'D-Day 75 Voyage of Remembrance'

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' *Boudicca* will be setting sail on one of the most poignant and moving journeys in its history on Sunday 2nd June 2019, on The Royal British Legion's historic seven-night 'D-Day 75 Voyage of Remembrance' from Dover.

Boudicca will be operating under charter to Suffolk-based Arena Travel, on behalf of The Royal British Legion, to carry up to 300 D-Day veterans – plus their carers and companions – from the iconic White Cliffs of Dover to the coast of Normandy, France. They will be attending a series of commemorative events in both England and France, to mark the 75th anniversary of the Normandy Landings, fought on the five beaches of 'Gold', 'Sword', 'Juno', 'Omaha' and 'Utah', on 6th June 1944.

To commemorate this very special sailing, and a 'first' for Fred. Olsen, *Boudicca's* exterior has been decorated with The Royal British Legion's recognisable red poppy insignia, most notably on the bow, stern and deckhouse.

Peter Deer, Commercial Director at Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

"It is a tremendous honour for us to be part of The Royal British Legion's commemorations to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Landings and the Battle of Normandy, in what is set to be a very emotional voyage for these veterans and their loved ones.

“We are very proud that our cruise ship, *Boudicca*, will be following the same path as the ships involved on this momentous day, which brought peace and reconciliation to mark the Second World War.”

Bob Gamble, The Royal British Legion’s Assistant Director for Commemorative Events, said:

“Seventy five years ago, the largest seaborne invasion force in history set sail for France on a mission to liberate Europe. Alongside their American cousins, nearly 160,000 men from Britain and the Commonwealth landed on the beaches of Normandy.

“Today, we stand in awe of their achievement and salute their bravery and sacrifice, on our journey back to Normandy.”

Among the D-Day veterans joining *Boudicca* for the much-anticipated Voyage is 95-year-old Ted Cordery, who was a Leading Seaman Torpedoman aboard *HMS Belfast* on 6th June 1944. Ted will be travelling down to Dover with his wife and carer, Glynis, from their home in Oxfordshire, and said the pair were counting down the days until 2nd June.

“It is very important”, said Ted. “I have been over there, when it was the 60th anniversary, and it can be quite emotional. You are going back to bad times. I was only 18/19, they were all 21, 22, 23. We were all volunteers drafted in. I think sometimes there’s a lost nation there, for all the men that were lost.

“I have been on big ships, little ships and mine sweepers, and I’m grateful to the Royal British Legion for including me. I never, ever thought I would go back to the beaches again. I’d like to just stand and remember.”

In Dover, veterans will receive a very special send-off, with the ‘40s-themed ‘Swingtime Sweethearts’ performing in the Cruise Terminal throughout the day, which will be decked out with flags and bunting, and a display of military vehicles from the era, as well as the Dover Sea Cadets marching and performing a number of evocative wartime songs,

Boudicca will then visit Dunkirk, France on 3rd June, where veterans and their guests will have the opportunity to spend the day on board the ship – resting in preparation for the events in the days ahead or meeting their fellow

veterans and sharing stories – or can opt to take a shuttle bus into Dunkirk town, famous for its wartime history.

During the day in Poole on 4th June – a maiden call for *Boudicca* and the largest ship ever to call at the Port – veterans will once again have time to relax and enjoy the ship's facilities, or head into the city and explore. On the quayside, the Ministry of Defence will be hosting military-themed events, entertainment and activities, which veterans can view and enjoy from the ship's decks or ashore, and the Royal Marines will also be coming on board.

Boudicca will dock in Portsmouth on 5th June for a day that is sure to be an undoubted highlight of this special voyage. To signify the importance of Portsmouth's role in the Normandy landings, from where much of the landing force sailed in 1944, a series of events will be taking place throughout the day. The veterans will disembark and attend the Royal Commemorative Ceremonies at Southsea Common, being organised by the Ministry of Defence, which will be attended by dignitaries and Heads of State from around the world.

Upon departure from Portsmouth, *Boudicca* will be escorted by a Royal Navy frigate, along with four smaller Navy vessels, into the Solent, where a flotilla of Royal Navy vessels and their sailors will be waiting to salute the ship. The city of Portsmouth will also be paying its own tribute, waving off the veterans on their way to France.

Following the large-scale commemorations in Portsmouth, *Boudicca* will then stand off the coast of Ventnor, Isle of Wight before sunset – accompanied by a Royal Navy escort warship – for a sombre 'Moment of Reflection' on deck, led by The Royal British Legion's National President, Lt General James Bashall CB, CBE, after which there will be a flypast of RAF aircraft, before the ship heads for Normandy.

On 6th June, following in the footsteps of the brave soldiers involved in the Battle of Normandy, *Boudicca* will arrive in Le Havre, France on the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings, for what is sure to be an emotional and memorable day for all. Veterans will disembark early in the morning to attend a Memorial Service at the Bayeux CWGC Cemetery, followed by a late afternoon of local events at Arromanches.

On 7th June, after an overnight stay in Le Havre, veterans will have the

opportunity to visit the 'Operation Overlord' beaches, 'Sword' and 'Gold', as well as Pegasus Bridge, the British Normandy Memorial and the Arromanches Military Museum.

Boudicca will return to Portsmouth on 8th June. To mark the Queen's birthday, a day of celebratory activities has been planned – including a screening of the Queen's birthday celebrations – for all on board to enjoy, and the city will be laying on a colourful firework display in the evening.

A sumptuous Gala Dinner will be the culmination of this commemorative sailing, before veterans and their companions *return to Dover for a final time on 9th June*.

During the Voyage, veterans and their companions will be treated to a wide range of entertainment on board, from stirring performances by The Royal British Legion Central Band, to celebrity acts and guest speakers.

The Royal British Legion's 'D-Day 75 Voyage of Remembrance' has been offered free of charge to D-Day veterans and their companions, funded by the UK Government's LIBOR grant, in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence.

ENDS

Note to Editors:

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

Rachael Jackson Public Relations Manager: E-mail: rachael.jackson@fredolsen.co.uk / Direct. Tel.: 01473 292233

Ellis Barker, Public Relations Executive: E-mail: ellis.barker@fredolsen.co.uk / Direct Tel.: 01473 292237

For further information on the 'D-Day 75 Voyage of Remembrance', visit Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' website at <https://www.fredolsencruises.com/royal-british-legion-d-day-voyage>

The Royal British Legion

Michael O'Connor, National PR Manager: 020 3207 2268 / 07458 064621;
moconnor@britishlegion.org.uk

Charlene Guy, National PR Officer: 020 3207 2237 / 07458 124853;
cguy@britishlegion.org.uk

For more details on The Royal British Legion, visit www.britishlegion.org.uk

- The Allied invasion of Normandy, known as D-Day, took place on 6th June 1944, and was the largest amphibious assault ever launched. More than 80,000 British and Canadian troops took part in the invasion on the beaches alongside United States Forces, in an Allied invasion Force of nearly 160,000. Another 23,400 British troops were landed by air. Supporting the invasion were more than 7,000 ships off the coast (including the famous *HMS Belfast*) and 11,000 aircraft. In total, British and Commonwealth casualties (killed, wounded or missing) on D-Day numbered approximately 4,300. The invasion was the first stage in the liberation of Europe from Nazi occupation, which ultimately led to victory for Allied Forces in 1945.

- Operated by Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, *Boudicca* is named after the British warrior queen. The ship was designed for world cruising and was extensively refurbished in March 2018. Images and video footage of *Boudicca* are available from The Royal British Legion Press Office.

Fred. Olsen Cruise Line operates in the UK with four intimately sized ships for a more personal cruising experience.

Contacts



Georgina May

Press Contact

Acting PR Manager

Public Relations

georgina.may@fredolsen.co.uk