

The Utah Beach Museum in Normandy casts new light on the contribution of Danish sailors on D-Day during World War II

Denmark's contribution to the Normandy invasion in 1944 will receive international recognition when France is hosting the 70th anniversary of D-Day. A new exhibition at the Utah Beach Museum documents the history of Danish naval efforts in connection with the liberation of Europe.

On 6 June 2014, it will be 70 years since Allied forces landed on the beaches in Normandy. This date will be marked by a major international event with 6000 invitees, including 17 heads of state – among them, Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain and *Queen Margrethe II* of Denmark. At the same time, in Normandy, Denmark will be officially recognized as one of the nations that contributed to the Normandy invasion in 1944. One of the high points during the Danish ceremony will be the opening of a special exhibition at Utah Beach Museum on the contribution of Danish sailors.

The Danish Minister for Culture, Marianne Jelved, says:

"For many years, the participation of Danish sailors in connection with the Normandy invasion in 1944 has been an overlooked chapter in the larger story of the Second World War. With the exhibition at the Utah Beach Museum, Denmark's contribution to the Allies' fight will now be shared with a large international audience. The Danish sailors put their lives at stake to help make sure that we in Europe live in freedom today. The sailors deserve to be recognised for their tremendous effort. I hope that this exhibition will be a step in that direction. And I am proud that the Danish flag will wave side by side with those of the other Allies on Normandy's coast."

Charles De Vallavieille, deputy mayor of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont, says:

"We have a special relationship with the Danish marines, who even at the beginning of the war chose to participate actively – sometimes, under foreign banners – in the fight against Nazism. Today, our museum conveys this exceptional memory and the importance of the participation of all the Allied nations during the war. At Utah, the Danish flag flies all year round over the monument, and most days it has flowers laid at its feet by visitors. Thus we recognise that the message is living, and is being passed on to subsequent generations."

The exhibition at Utah Beach Museum documents the heroic effort of the Danish sailors in connection with the struggle against Nazi Germany and the liberation of Europe. A total of 800 Danish sailors participated in the Allied forces in "Operation Overlord". It is a historical milestone that the sailors' efforts will finally be recognized officially and that, from now on, the Danish flag will be visible among the other Allied flags on the Normandy coast.

The Utah Beach Museum welcomes between 120,000-150,000 visitors annually from all over the world and is one of the area's biggest tourist attractions. With support from the Danish Ministry of Culture, the special exhibition on the Danish contribution will be made a permanent part of the museum in early 2016. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark and the French Minister of the Interior, Bernard Cazeneuve, will be present on 6 June when the exhibition opens.

Facts

In 2014, Denmark will be officially recognized as one of the contributing nations in the Allied invasion of Normandy in 1944. A total of 800 Danish mariners participated in "Operation Overlord". The 70th anniversary of D-Day will be celebrated in Normandy with a comprehensive international programme during the days around D-Day (6 June) this year. 17 heads of state are expected to participate – including Queen Elizabeth of England and President Obama. The Danish delegation will include Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, representatives of veteran organisations, the Danish Minister for Defence, the Danish Chief of Defence and Denmark's ambassador to France. The event will include up to 6000 invitees and over 1000 journalists. The Danish Ministry for Culture is contributing with financial support in the amount of DKK 75,000 for the exhibition at Utah Beach Museum.

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