

# OPERATION SWIM

**What lengths  
would you go to  
for our veterans?**



**HELP for  
HEROES**

# WELCOME TO OPERATION SWIM

## COMMEMORATING THE 80 YEARS SINCE THE NORMANDY LANDINGS

D-Day. 6 June 1944. Allied Forces crossed the English Channel to liberate Nazi occupied Europe. Battling blustery seas, they landed on five beaches in Normandy – Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. This marked the beginning of the end of World War Two.

## D-DAY: THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO A SWIMMING POOL: THE BEGINNING OF HELP FOR HEROES

In 2007 our co-founders Bryn and Emma Parry launched a fundraising appeal for a space where veterans could swim and recover in dignity. The public's response was overwhelming and led to the creation of Help for Heroes.

Bryn and Emma created the Charity to make sure no veteran is left behind.

Because life can be tough when your military career comes to an end. Overnight, you lose your job, way of life, and a support network that's like a family.

In the UK today, many veterans and their families are struggling with painful injuries, mental trauma, loneliness, isolation, sleepless nights, disability, inaccessible homes, and poverty.

**This is the Veterans War.  
It's a war forgotten by many.  
But not by us.**

These people may no longer be in the headlines. But their daily struggles are no less challenging. And as public support declines, their need for support increases.

So, no matter why someone's Armed Forces career has ended, we provide life-changing support to veterans, their families and those who served alongside the British military.

Veterans like Simon.

**While on tour in Afghanistan, Simon stepped on a makeshift bomb, and he lost both his legs.**



## MEET SIMON

“Surgeons saved my life at Camp Bastion, then I was flown back to the UK, where I underwent four and a half years of surgery and physio.

“Not long after my treatment, I felt confident enough to try swimming again. Out of water, I felt self-conscious. But in water, I felt normal.

“My first length was a lot of splashing, but I was determined to get stronger. So, I set a target to work towards. It was fantastic rehab.

“

**Swimming keeps me grounded and makes me resilient. It's also great for mental and physical health.**

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“I refuse to be defined by my injuries. Thanks to swimming I can lead an active lifestyle and have found new ways of enjoying the things I did before my injury.

“Throughout it all, Help for Heroes was there. From supplying toiletries and clothes when I was in hospital, to helping with house adaptations when I moved back home.”



# YOUR CHALLENGE THIS JUNE

Swim the equivalent length of one, or more, of these beaches. By taking part in your personal and exciting swimming challenge, you'll be providing life-changing support for veterans and their families – no matter where or when they served.

## Can you go the distance?

Throughout June, we're asking you to swim one of four distances between 5km to 47km. This range of distance reflects the varying lengths of the five Normandy beaches:

**UTAH – 5km** (200 lengths of a 25-metre pool)

**OMAHA – 7km** (280 lengths of a 25-metre pool)

**GOLD, JUNO or SWORD – 11.5km** (460 lengths of a 25-metre pool)

**GOLD + JUNO + SWORD – 35km** (1,400 lengths of a 25-metre pool)

**ALL BEACHES combined – 47km** (1,880 lengths of a 25-metre pool)

**UTAH**  
5km

**OMAHA**  
7km

**GOLD  
JUNO  
SWORD**  
11.5km  
each



# THE D-DAY BEACHES



## BACKGROUND

By 1944, Germany had captured France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. To prevent invasion, German forces built the Atlantic Wall – a line of defences stretching down the coast of France all the way to Norway.

Beaches along this stretch were heavily guarded and covered with landmines, barbed wire, and wooden spikes. To successfully enter and liberate Europe, Allied forces had to find a suitable landing area amongst these fierce defences.

## PREPARATIONS

Secret plans to invade Europe began during 1943. A 50 mile stretch of the Normandy coast was chosen because it had relatively light defences and good shelter.

Five key beaches were selected to land upon. They were given the code-names Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword.

To help boats land and offload troops and cargo, portable temporary harbours were built called Mulberries. And to make sure Allied forces had enough fuel to run their vehicles, an undersea petrol pipeline, code named the PLUTO line, was also built. Landing in the right conditions was also crucial. After calculating what the tides, moon and weather would be doing, the 5 June was chosen as D-Day.

## DECEPTION

For the landings to work, German forces needed to be unaware of these plans, so subterfuge was used to distract them.

Inflatable tanks were built so it looked like more Allied forces were poised to attack. Spies and double agents spread false information, and on the morning of D-Day dummy parachutes were dropped away from the Normandy beaches to divert attention.

## D-DAY

The weather on the 5 June was terrible and D-Day had to be postponed by a day.

The invasion began just after midnight on the 6 June and more than 156,000 Allied troops stormed the five heavily defended beaches that day. Less than a week later, all five beaches had been secured by the Allies, and over 326,000 troops had landed at Normandy. In the following months they advanced across northwestern France, eventually liberating Paris, which marked the beginning of the end of World War Two.



### Where will you swim?

This is a virtual challenge, so you don't need to be in Normandy. Simply pick your distance and head to your favourite swimming spot.

Take the plunge indoors and head to your local swimming pool. Or brace yourself for some cold water swimming and find an outdoor swimming club near you.

Wherever you choose to swim, please make sure you are safe and, if swimming outdoors, that you are not alone and swimming is allowed.

### Want to be a top fundraiser?

- Update your fundraising page about section and tell everyone why you're taking part in the challenge.
- Donate on your page to show everyone how serious you are about your challenge, remember once you receive your first donation, we will send your free branded swimming cap to you.
- Invite your closest friends and family to donate to your page.

**You can find lots of resources and inspiration on our website for your fundraising:**  
[Get inspired with lots of different ways to fundraise | Help For Heroes'](#)



# WHAT YOUR MONEY DOES

Your money will change veterans and their families' lives, by providing:

- **Equipment, like specialist wheelchairs, to give people freedom and dignity.**
- **Sports and social activities to tackle loneliness and improve people's health.**
- **Training courses, to give veterans the skills and confidence to take back control of their lives.**
- **Counselling through our Hidden Wounds service to enable veterans and their families to live a better life.**

And much more.

Any questions? Please get in touch [events@helpforheroes.org.uk](mailto:events@helpforheroes.org.uk)

