We will remember them on the beaches… National Fish and Chip Day honours the 80th Anniversary of D-Day

Tuesday 28 May, 2024

As the nation prepares to honour those who took part in the D-Day landings in Normandy, a former Royal Navy Engineer has taken his fish and chip van to the historic Sword beach, where visitors from around the world come to pay their respects to the fallen and see for themselves the site of one of the major battles of WWII.

Calum, aged 51, was born in Aberdeen and has lived in Stonehaven all his life; he joined the Royal Navy three weeks after his 16th birthday and has always maintained very strong connections with the armed forces and because of that he was passionate about being involved in this collaboration and to be part of an event to honour all those involved in the D-Day landings.

Because of the exceptional links between fish and chips and WWII and D-Day in particular, National Fish and Chip Day is honouring all those involved in the D-Day landings, the largest naval, land and air operation in history, and moving their day from its traditional Friday slot in 2024 and will be celebrating the nation's favourite dish on **Thursday 6th June** to coincide with the D-Day anniversary.

Fish and chips were called 'Good Companions' by Winston Churchill; his Government safeguarded the supply of fish and potatoes to ensure the dish remained unrationed as it was felt it would be detrimental to the morale of the nation. Fish and chips are often considered to be the British national dish and this humble meal was a vital ingredient of the war effort in both the First and Second World Wars.

But even more incredible is that during the D-Day landings, soldiers who found themselves behind enemy lines at night, on Sword Beach and the other landing sites, and needed a way of telling whether someone nearby was a friend or foe - they devised a two-word code…one would call 'fish' and the other replied 'chips'!

Sword Beach was one of the five main landing areas along the Normandy coast during the initial assault phase of the Operation Overlord campaign; the beach saw the landing of thousands of British, French and Allied troops from across the world as the first phase of the liberation of France, and visitors to the beach were treated to traditional fish and chips, which were of huge importance not just during WWII but on D-Day in particular.

Echoing the alliance of WWII – the British fish and chip van worked with local French suppliers and cooked fish from a nearby French fish market and used Normandy potatoes to create the chips.

Making the visit possible were the Normandy Tourist Board and their colleagues at Ouistreham Town Council who kindly granted permission for the van to be on the beach. Speaking of the event, Normandy Tourism said, "We are truly delighted to welcome a traditional fish & chips truck to Normandy for the National Fish and Chip day. Normandy and the UK share strong historical, cultural and friendship ties, and it is particularly important for us to welcome the team on this beach in Ouistreham, where history unfolded on 6thJune 1944, and which is a reminder of the values we share. The Brits will always receive a very warm welcome here in Normandy, and you may be surprised to hear that the fish & chips dish itself is increasingly popular in France!"

DFDS and Brittany Ferries were also involved in transporting the van and personnel to France and The Bay Fish and Chips for bringing their award-winning van to the beach and cooking the fish and chips. Owner of the van, Calum Richardson, is an ex-Navy sailor and was passionate about being involved.

Gary Lewis, President of the National Edible Oil Distributors Association (NEODA), founders of National Fish and Chip Day, said "National Fish and Chip Day has always brought the nation together to celebrate this iconic dish, and because of the intrinsic links it has always had with the world wars and D-Day we knew we wanted to be as involved as possible so we moved the date to show our support and were delighted to work with our French colleagues to get a fish and chip van over to Sword Beach."

National Fish and Chip Day recognises and thanks everyone involved in bringing fish and chips to the centre of every community; from the fishers who go out in all weathers to catch the delicious fish, and the farmers who grow and harvest the perfect potatoes and peas, to the fish and chip shops and restaurants

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