

## Fresh battle at D-Day beaches as veterans say French plan for huge offshore wind farms is 'desecrating' shrine to the fallen

By [Peter Allen](#)

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A campaign has been launched to prevent the French government 'desecrating' the D-Day beaches with an immense offshore wind farm.

War veterans gathering in Northern France for the 67th anniversary of the Normandy landings are among those calling for the scheme to be abandoned.

Announced by President Nicolas Sarkozy earlier this year, it would see dozens of 525ft generators – each more than three times the size of the Statue of Liberty - placed less than 10 miles off the landing beaches.



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**Never forget: U.S. veteran Jacob Bryan Sperry, of the 75th Division, walks in the American cemetery of Colleville-sur-Mer during a commemoration trip with students from Ozarks College, Missouri**



**Sacred site: U.S. veterans Herbert Anderson, 348th Engineer Combat Battalion, and Mr Sperry surrounded by Missouri students - and a sea of crosses**

Laurent Beauvais, Socialist president of the lower Normandy regional council, has even said he 'rejoiced' at the plan, claiming it would have 'no impact on fishing or tourism'.

But David Churchcroft, a former infantryman who stormed ashore with the British 2nd Army on June 6th 1944, said: 'It will change the entire seascape, destroying a view which evokes memories of the most astonishing invasion in military history.'

'This is sacred ground, and the French should not be allowed to alter its character,' added Mr Churchcroft, from north London.



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Historic scene: The terrain of the Normandy landings on June 6, 1944 - a 'sacred ground' for veterans - would be forever altered by the wind farm

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Blight: How the view from the beachhead at Normandy might look if the plan for an offshore wind farm goes ahead

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**War zones: The areas of French coast codenamed Omaha and Juno - the U.S. and Canadian landing zones respectively - and the proposed offshore wind farm area**

'These beaches are designed to preserve the memory of those who fought for freedom. They should not be desecrated.'

The Normandy wind farm is not due to be built until 2015, so plans are still at a relatively early stage.

However, it is likely that the generators will be visible on the horizon looking out from Juno Beach, the code name for one of five sectors of the Allied invasion.

Juno was the target of 3rd Canadian Infantry Division supported by British Royal Marine Commandos.



**Resistance: British veterans gathering in Normandy for the annual D-Day memorial are among those opposed to plans to erect a wind farm offshore from the landings site**



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**Honour the veterans: Some members of the lower Normandy regional council have resurrected a campaign to get the D-Day landing beaches classified as a Unesco world heritage site**



**Memorial: The beaches in Normandy, such as this one at Arromanches, are shrines to those lost in the war. Opponents to the wind farm say visible turbines would ruin the atmosphere**

It is less than 20 miles from the coastline codenamed Omaha Beach in 1944, where U.S. forces suffered more than 2,000 casualties during the operation.

Admiral Christian Brac de la Perriere, president of the Comité du Débarquement, the official French body tasked with commemorating D-Day, agreed that the plan was 'incoherent', adding: 'They want to put these generators at the centre of the landing areas.'

And Dominic Metter, who coordinates opposition to unsightly wind farms across Europe said: 'With no exception our organisations regard this as an invasion of sacred ground where so many warriors gave their lives.'



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**French President: Nicolas Sarkozy, seen here speaking during the 65th anniversary of D-Day at the Normandy in Colleville-sur-Mer, said up to \$15m will be spent on building five groups of generators**

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Some members of the lower Normandy regional council have even resurrected a campaign to get the D-Day landing beaches classified as a Unesco world heritage site - something which could prevent the wind farm being built.

Among those backing the plan are veteran French politician Simone Veil, a Holocaust survivor and the first elected president of the European parliament.

At present, thousands of tourists who visit the Normandy battlefields can get a very good idea of how the coastline looked during the Second World War.

# **'It will change the entire seascape, destroying a view which evokes memories of the most astonishing invasion in military history. This is sacred ground, and the French should not be allowed to alter its character'**

Many of the original gun emplacements and pill boxes are still in place, as well as part of the so-called 'Mulberry Harbour' built off the seaside town of Arromanches.

Now up to 80 of the wind farm generators could appear on the maritime horizon, spoiling the historic view and bringing further problems including light pollution blowing inland.

At present France has no large offshore wind farms, but wants to catch up with Britain and Germany by the end of this decade.

Mr Sarkozy said the equivalent of more than \$15million would be spent on building five groups of generators from 2015, all of which will produce as much electricity as two nuclear power stations.

Two will be on the Normandy coast, with one directly off the D-Day beaches.

A French government spokesman said that plans for the wind farms were being handled with 'the greatest sensitivity', and that the impact on the view from Normandy's wartime beachhead would be 'limited'.

The spokesman said Mr Sarkozy was also sympathetic to seeing the area become a World Heritage site, saying this could even happen in time for the 70th anniversary of D-Day in 2014.

D-Day commemorations will be held across Normandy tomorrow, as people remember the campaign which heralded the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of the war.

[www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1394605/Campaign-launched-67th-anniversary-D-Day-stop-French-desecrating-beaches-huge-offshore-wind-farm.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1394605/Campaign-launched-67th-anniversary-D-Day-stop-French-desecrating-beaches-huge-offshore-wind-farm.html)