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AS THE 75th anniversary of D-Day approaches, scores of civic buildings across Liverpool will be lit up red, white and blue to pay tribute to the men and women who took part in the Normandy Landings.

The Royal British Legion, in Liverpool, has also organised a special commemoration event which is due to take place in St John's Gardens on Thursday at 11am.

Reverend Canon Dr Crispin Pailing, the leader of the service, has asked for the public's help in respecting the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for personal freedom.

He said: "When we commemorate the anniversary of D-Day, we are not just reading from history books, but celebrating and acknowledging the tremendous service given by men and women in 1944 which has directly shaped our world today.

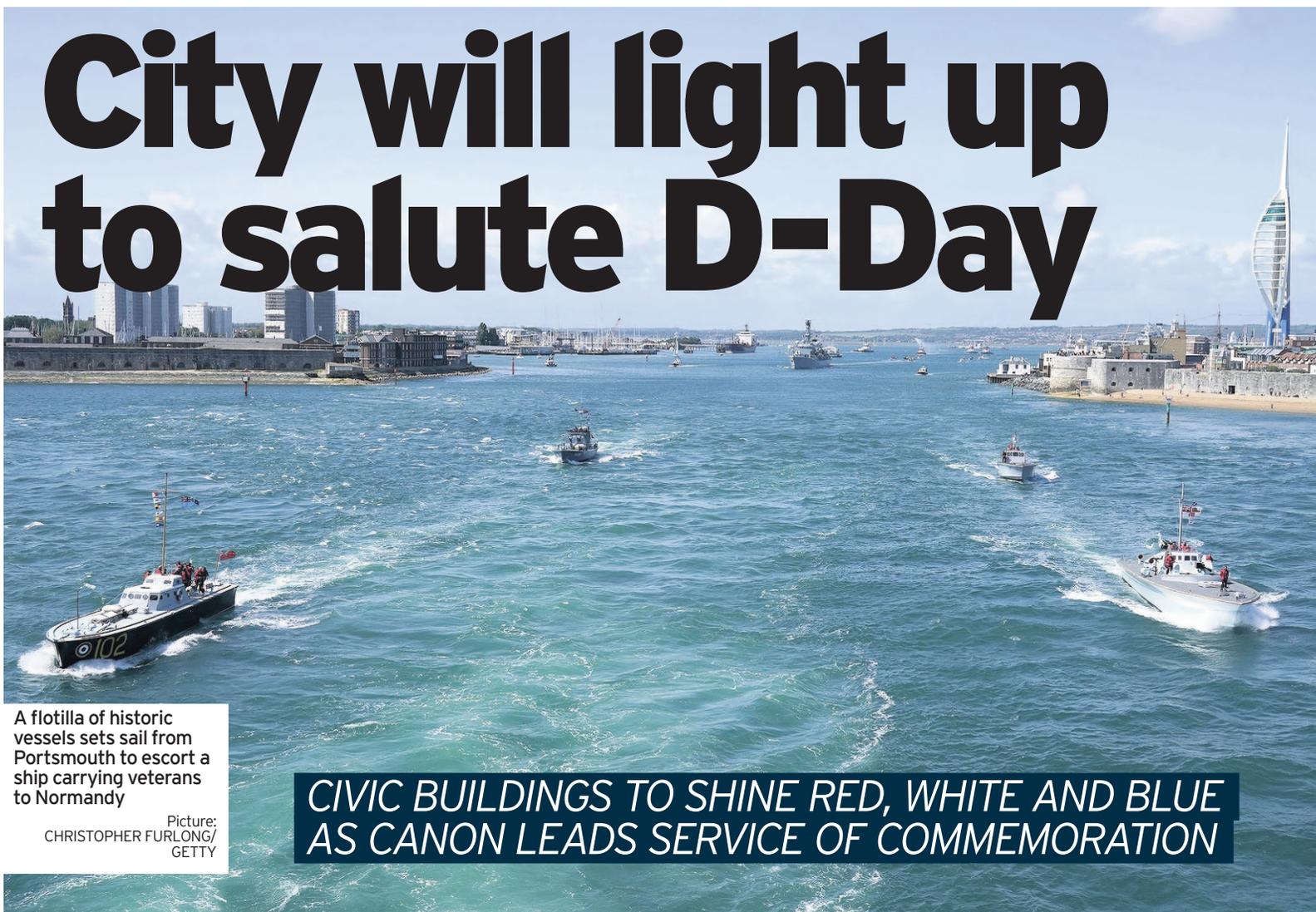
"Along with every city and community in the UK, Liverpool played its part in restoring democracy and freedom across western Europe and I am proud to be part of the commemoration of the battle against Nazism."

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Cllr Peter Brennan, will join the Rev Dr Pailing and the Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mark Blundell, to deliver the service.

Cllr Brennan said: "This was one of the most decisive actions of the Second World War and Liverpool played no small part in its success, which ultimately led to the allied victory in Europe.

"All those of us who appreciate the

City will light up to salute D-Day



A flotilla of historic vessels sets sail from Portsmouth to escort a ship carrying veterans to Normandy

Picture:
CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/
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CIVIC BUILDINGS TO SHINE RED, WHITE AND BLUE AS CANON LEADS SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION

values of liberty, freedom of speech, the democratic process and the ability to live our lives without persecution, owes our D-Day heroes a debt that can never be repaid."

The Liverpool Royal British Legion (RBL) are recreating the D-Day journey by taking 200 D-Day veterans to commemorations in the UK and

France on board the MV Boudicca. Bill Martin, of the Liverpool RBL, explained: "On Thursday, we will stand in awe of the achievement and salute the bravery and sacrifice.

"We invite any veterans or their families who have not made the trip to France and wish to commemorate their achievements to join us."

The D-Day launch is often regarded as the "turning of the tide" of the Second World War and it was the largest seaborne invasion in history.

Around 160,000 people across the world took part in the operation as they set sail for France in a bid to liberate Europe - and thousands of Liverpoolians played their part. Two

battalions of the Kings (Liverpool) Regiment were tasked with securing Sword and Juno beaches by providing cover for the troops and equipment coming ashore.

The city also kept the sea lanes clear so that US troops were able to land safely in Britain.

■ **My father's miracle escape: P28-29**

The sea seemed to be boiling, recalls veteran Arthur

By **PADDY SHENNAN**

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"WHEN I joined the Royal Navy in 1943 as a 17-year-old, the farthest I'd ever been at sea was a sailing from Liverpool to Llandudno."

A year later, Arthur Hampson, from Formby, was taking part in the D-Day Landings - the largest seaborne invasion in history.

This week, as part of the 75th anniversary commemorations, the Royal British Legion is taking 300 UK veterans, including several from Merseyside, back to Normandy (last week, we featured the story of Walter Bigland, 94, a former Royal Marine Commando, from Aintree, who was 19 when he arrived on Gold Beach at La Brèche, with A Troop, 45 Commando on June 6, 1944).

Meanwhile, former midshipman Arthur, 93, recalls: "I was on a landing craft tank (LCT) carrying five 30-ton Sherman 'swimming tanks', each with a crew of five -

they were supposed to be the first things on the beach in our sector, going ahead of the infantry to take out the German machine gun posts.

"We had joined a flotilla of 12 LCTs in Southampton on June 4. We sailed at about 5.30pm on June 5 in two columns of six. We passed through a vast armada of ships at anchor between the mainland and the Isle of Wight - it was an unforgettable sight.

"I remember looking back at the coast and wondering if I would ever see it again."

He adds: "I don't remember much about the night-time crossing, although I was too excited to sleep.

"Our orders were to launch our tanks into the sea five miles off St Aubin, but the sea was far too rough, so we were ordered to head to the beach at speed, and we grounded about 300 yards from the water's edge at Juno Beach.

"There was so much machine gun and rifle fire coming towards us, the sea seemed to be boiling. All went well, until we got to the fifth and



Arthur Hampson in naval uniform during wartime; and, right, today



final tank. The tank commander got shot in the hand, so his number two reached down to get a field dressing and accidentally trod on the gun's firing mechanism, which blew away the inflatable canvas screen and the tank just sank. Three of the crew escaped, and we managed to recover one of them, who was most upset when we told him that he

would be coming back to Portsmouth with us. But two men trapped inside both drowned.

"The LCT next to us hit a mine which blew a hole in the engine room, injuring the two men inside.

"We backed off the beach and retired three miles offshore, before being ordered to return to Portsmouth in a convoy of LCTs - so

we assumed all was going well on shore."

Arthur and his fellow crew members had to stay in Portsmouth for four days as their LCT underwent repairs.

They then ferried an American unit to Utah Beach, Normandy - dodging German bombs on the way back - before taking another load of US troops to Omaha Beach around June 16.

Arthur, who has been married to Joyce for 68 years and has one daughter, Penny, and two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, later spent 38 years working in Customs and Excise.

He had left the Navy in December, 1946, when he was a sub-lieutenant.

Of his wartime service, Arthur says: "I had a job to do, and I was anxious not to let anyone down. I wanted to survive, but none of us wanted to pick up a life-changing injury, so you would rather go straight away.

"But I'm not a hero. Other people suffered much more than I did."