

Normandie Mémoire Good Conduct Charter for Collectors and Re-Enactors

Preamble

Alongside the traditional methods of passing on the history of the Normandy Landings and the subsequent campaign, associations of collectors or re-enactors also help, in their own way, to preserve the memory of those who fought, express gratitude to the liberating Allies and pay tribute to the victims of this pivotal event in World War II.

In the interests of those members of the public who attend such displays and the many collectors and re-enactors who gravitate towards Lower Normandy during the celebrations marking the events of 6th June 1944 and the Battle of Normandy, whether as part of an association or independently, it has become necessary to remind everyone, in a single document, of the legal provisions and rules of dress and behaviour that ensure that such displays take place without incident.

Article One (1) – Purpose

The purpose of this charter is not only to ensure respect for those who came to liberate Europe and the spirit of the places where that liberation took place, but also to specify the regulations and recommendations that all collectors and re-enactors must follow when taking part in historical events or displays.

The collector or re-enactor – whether as part of an association or acting independently – must obey the current legislation, the regulations set out in this charter and any rules defined by the organisers of the events or display(s) in which they are taking part.

The organisers of such commemorative events or displays, whether officers of an organisation or acting independently, must ensure that participants in the event for which they are responsible obey the law, the regulations set out in this charter and any of the above-mentioned specific rules.

Everyone involved will be deemed collectively responsible for any breach of the above-stated principles.

Each charter signatory will be deemed individually responsible for ensuring that all those taking part in the events or displays of which they are in charge adhere to its provisions.

Article Two (2) – Respect for the spirit of place

Lower Normandy has come to symbolize the sacrifice made by young Allied soldiers who came from the sky and from the sea to free this land from the Nazi yoke and to re-establish democratic principles and the values of humanism in France and throughout Europe. Those who collect and re-enact help to preserve this memory and must, by their behaviour, show the utmost respect for this history, for those who fought and for those who suffered, adopting an attitude which reflects the momentousness of these events.

The celebration of these historic days must in no way be considered a glorification of war. The military deeds alone must never become the focus of events or displays. Respect for this memory is a vector of humanism, conveying a message of peace, of friendship between peoples, democracy and freedom in the name of the military and civilian victims who paid for these values with their blood.

Article Three (3) – Notification of events and displays

Re-enactment associations and individual re-enactors must make themselves known to the local council of each town or village in which they intend to display, and must provide the town council with a signed copy of the charter, which will have the effect of committing the association or individual re-enactor to abide by all the rules contained therein. The town council will then inform the relevant authorities of the display.

When this declaration is made, the re-enactment group or individual re-enactors must have obtained the explicit permission of the owner(s) of the site(s) where the display is to take place.

They must define and agree with the town council the details of such display(s) (in particular, the dates and times, and any public areas to be used) and these must be set out in a written document. This document must be shown to the police, if requested.

Where battle re-enactments are concerned, these must be authorised by the Prefecture in advance and must never be held near war memorials (cenotaphs), other memorials or military cemeteries.

The wearing of uniforms, while carrying weapons, outside of pre-agreed displays will not be permitted.

All established breaches will be dealt with according to the provisions of the French Penal Code, summarized in Appendix 1 of this charter.

Article Four (4) – Behaviour

Each collector or re-enactor will be expected to maintain in all circumstances a dignified and exemplary deportment while members of the public are present. Appendix 2 of this charter explains the specific requirements for those who re-enact in public places or places to which the general public have admittance.

The re-enactment group must be supervised at all times: the association's chairperson or the group leader whose name has been supplied to the authorities will be responsible for the good behaviour of its members and ensure that the services are provided in accordance with the prior declaration described in Article 3 of this charter.

Article Five (5) – Uniforms

Uniforms from the period being represented are permitted, as well as high-quality copies.

The person responsible for each display must check each participant's uniform before issuing said participant with written permission to participate.

The wearing of historic military uniform outside the periods (days and times) agreed with the local authority is forbidden.

The wearing of uniforms and accoutrements likely to cause offence and breaches of the peace, due to the memories of historical events that such uniforms and accoutrements evoke, is generally prohibited. However, by special dispensation and for the purposes of a specific event (e.g. the re-enactment of a historical event), with the agreement of the local authority and/or the organisers of the event, the wearing of such uniforms will be permitted, providing it is restricted to the place and time of the event in question. Those concerned must change back into civilian dress as soon as the re-enactment is over.

The unauthorised wearing of decorations is forbidden by the French Penal Code. This applies equally to foreign decorations (i.e. those awarded by nations other than France.)

For further explanation regarding uniforms see Appendix 3 of this charter.

Article six (6) – Weapons

All weaponry used in displays and historical re-enactments must comply with current French legislation governing the possession and use of firearms and must be representative of the types of weapons that were standard issue in the period being represented.

The leader of a re-enactment group or display organiser must provide a detailed list of all weaponry and other military equipment that will be used to the relevant town council, which will then forward it to the Gendarmerie at least 15 days before the display.

Every participant in such displays must be prepared, at any time, to present the certificates of compliance for the weapons and equipment in their possession.

Further information and guidance concerning the presence and use of historic weapons is supplied in Appendix 4 of this charter.

Article seven (7) – Vehicles

The appearance of historic vehicles featured in a static display, parade or re-enactment must resemble as far possible that of vehicles present during the events being represented.

Any vehicle which does not conform to the historical reality being represented and which does not meet the detailed requirements set out in Appendix 5 of this charter may be refused access to the site by the mayor and, on his authority, by anyone in charge of an event.

Article eight (8) – Signature of the charter

In general, the signature of this charter signifies the willingness of the signatory, or the entire membership on behalf of whom he or she has signed, to comply with all the provisions set out herein.

In particular, each new display or event that is deemed to fall within the ambit of this charter must result in a new signature of the charter by the association that is organising the new event or display, thereby signifying its intention to meet all the charter's provisions and recommendations.

Once signed, the charter will be sent to the Normandie Mémoire association for safe keeping.

Signed in Caen on 27th May 2008 by
M. BART, Prefect of Calvados and Lower Normandy,
and
Admiral BRAC de la PERRIERE, Chairman of Normandie Mémoire.

The following page (not translated here) is to be completed, signed, dated and sent to the local authority where the display will take place. Note the requirement in French to specify WHERE the signature was made and to write the words "Lu et approuvé" above your signature..

Normandie Mémoire Good Conduct Charter for Collectors and Re-Enactors

Votre acte d'engagement à déposer dans les mairies des communes dans lesquelles vous souhaitez être présent(s)

Je soussigné, [full name in capital letters] _____,
membre ou responsable de l'association [name of association of which you are chairperson or member in capital letters]

- certifie avoir pris connaissance des règles mentionnées ou rappelées dans la présente charte et ses cinq annexes, déclare adhérer à l'ensemble des dispositions édictées et m'engage à les mettre en œuvre ;
- certifie que les documents concernant mon véhicule de collection sont en règle conformément à la législation en vigueur ;
- certifie que les armes et matériels de guerre emportés sont en tous points conformes à la législation en vigueur.

A [Place & date] _____, le

Signature précédée de la mention « lu et approuvé »

[Signature]

Cadre réservé à la mairie d'accueil / Strictly reserved for the town council

- Valable pour la manifestation du _____ au _____
- Préciser le(s) lieu(x) des manifestations:

Fait à _____, le _____

Signature et Cachet de la Mairie

Appendix one (1) – A reminder of the relevant legislation

In this translation the author will not attempt to describe the detail of the legislation in order to avoid possible mistranslation and misinterpretation.

Article 433-14 of the French Penal Code makes punishable by one year's imprisonment and a 15,000-euro fine:

- 1) The wearing of any clothing, uniform, or decorations regulated by the authorities,
- 2) The use of any official document or insignia regulated by the authorities,
- 3) The use of any vehicle which appears to be the same as those used by the police or military, in public places by persons who are not entitled to do so.

Article 433-15 of the French Penal Code makes punishable by six months' imprisonment and a fine of 7,500 euros:

The wearing of any clothing or uniform or the use of any vehicle, document, badge or insignia used by the police or military where such action is deemed likely to mislead the public.

Article R645-1 of the French Penal Code makes it an offence punishable by a fine to display, except for the purposes of a film, play or historical display, any uniform, insignia or emblem resembling the uniform, insignia or emblem worn or displayed by a criminal organization (defined as such under the provisions of the London Agreement) or by a person convicted of crimes against humanity.

Those found guilty of such offences may also incur:

- 1) Withdrawal of their right to possess or carry firearms subject to declaration for up to three years,
- 2) The confiscation of any undeclared firearms of which they have free disposal or which are in their possession,
- 3) The confiscation of any article involved in or intended for use in the commission of the offence,
- 4) Between twenty and one hundred and twenty hours of community service.

Legal entities may be held penally liable under the conditions of Article 121-2 for the offence defined herein.

Penalties incurred by legal entities are:

- 1) The fine, in accordance with the terms set out in Article 131-41
- 2) Confiscation of the item which was used or which was intended for use in the commission of the offence or the item which resulted from it.

Any repeat of the offence described herein shall be punished in accordance with Articles 132-11 and 132-15.

Article 57, paragraphs 1 and 2, of Decree 95-589 (6th May 1995), as modified, relating to the implementation of the Decree of 18th April 1939 setting out the regulations governing military equipment, weapons and ammunition:

“1 the carriage and transportation of category 5, 7 and 8 shoulder weapons and their ammunition (hunting firearms; firearms for sporting or recreational purposes; curios, relics, replicas, unserviceable firearms) are unrestricted.

2 The following are forbidden, except in the cases provided for in articles 58-1 and 58-2:
-the carriage of category 1 and category 4 weapons and their ammunition (offensive, defensive and competition firearms), category 7 and 8 hand and shoulder weapons (firearms for sporting and recreational purposes; curios, relics, replicas and unserviceable firearms), the category 6 weapons (cold steel) listed in article 2 as well as, without any legitimate reason, the carriage of other category 6 weapons (cold steel);

- the carriage with legitimate reason, of category 1 and 4 weapons and their ammunition (offensive, defensive and competition firearms), category 6 weapons and category 7 hand weapons (cold steel; firearms for sporting or recreational purposes).” “...”

Appendix two (2) – Behaviour

The recommendations contained in this appendix supplement the provisions of Article Four (4) of the charter.

All actions, speeches, writings or behaviour inconsistent with respect for the spirit of place and authorised events will be punished.

Re-enactors must be proud to represent the liberators they portray and must maintain a dignified and military deportment during any commemorative ceremonies to which they may be invited by the local council or event organisers.

Any form of salute during the playing of national or military anthems or during official ceremonies is strictly forbidden.

Except in exceptional circumstances, re-enactment groups or individuals must stand to attention and remain silent during official ceremonies and no weapons must be handled.

During reconstructions of Allied camps or static displays, especially when members of the public are present, all modern items must be hidden from view. Re-enactors must accept that they have chosen to recreate the conditions of the period, perhaps to the detriment of their personal comfort, which is in itself a form of tribute to the veterans.

Appendix three (3) – Dress

In addition to the provisions set out in Article five (5) of the charter, all collectors and re-enactors are reminded that the wearing of military uniform brings with it for the wearer a

requirement to respect the uniform being worn, and to conduct oneself in a modest and respectful manner in all circumstances.

Re-enactors must be clean, clean-shaven, have short hair and not wear anything that is inappropriate to the portrayal of a soldier of the period being recreated.

Dress must be an accurate representation of that worn by the unit being re-enacted, and equipment must be worn or carried in the regulatory manner. Make-believe uniforms, especially paramilitary uniforms not representative of the period, must not be worn.

Re-enactors must only wear uniforms and carry weapons and equipment appropriate to the category of personnel being re-enacted – for example it is inappropriate for women to carry weapons.

Organisers must also ensure that each participant plays a role appropriate to his or her age. Thus, within a platoon, section or detachment, priority must go to young people who, for the sake of historical accuracy, must not generally be given the rank of officer, warrant officer or NCO, let alone senior officer. Particular attention must be given to the wearing of rank insignia, and all are reminded that the majority of soldiers, sailors and airmen were neither officers nor NCOs.

In order to maintain historical accuracy, each group must be homogenous in its make-up, in particular avoiding mixes of roles or nationalities (e.g. infantry, sailors and airmen, British, American and French).

Although the unauthorised wearing of decorations is forbidden, campaign medals, ribbons and awards, good conduct awards and qualification badges may be worn on walking-out dress in accordance with the regulations which were in force during the period being re-created.

After checking every participant's uniform, the person in charge of the display (or another person to whom he/she has delegated that authority) must issue each participant with permission to participate.

Appendix four (4) Weapons

The carrying of weapons is strictly forbidden, especially that of bladed weapons, which must only be presented in displays.

However, during displays pre-arranged with the local authority, at the agreed places, dates and times, re-enactors may carry bladed knives, blank-firing guns and so-called "historic weapons" (deactivated firearms) as appropriate to the scenario being portrayed.

In general, all weapons and ammunition that are carried must comply with French law, specifically Decree 95-589 (6th May 1995), amended version 4th May 2007.

Certificates must be available for inspection when requested by the police.

“In application of articles 32 and 39 of Decree 95-589, as modified, the acquisition and possession of category 2 military equipment, weapons and ammunition by a natural person or legal entity is subject to prefectoral authorisation.”

Since the publication in the Official Gazette on 30th November 2005 of Decree 2005-1463 dated 23rd November 2005, the acquisition and possession by a natural person or legal entity of tanks, planes and other heavy military equipment is subject to prefectoral authorisation, without which said acquisition and possession is illegal.

Owners of such equipment must be prepared to present their authorisation to the police when requested.

This heavy equipment is defined in Article 1 of Decree 95-589 of 6th May 1995, in accordance with the regulations governing military equipment, weapons and ammunition. It includes (list not exhaustive):

- Battle tanks,

Other armoured vehicles, including armoured recovery vehicles and other engineering vehicles, such as mine-layers, half-tracked vehicles and wheeled armoured vehicles,

- Aircraft,
- Warships,
- Soft-skin vehicles with permanently mounted weapons or weapon mounts,
- Equipment designed for air transport or air drops,
- Signals and telecommunications equipment designed for military use or warfare, and electronic countermeasures (ECM).
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All weapons must have been deactivated prior to the display.

Blank-firing weapons may only be used within the framework of a pre-arranged battle re-enactment and must be discharged in pre-arranged places, at pre-arranged dates and times. Blank ammunition must be kept in a locked metal box.

All weapons must be stored in a locked, secure place, clearly labelled “Restricted Area”; the weapons must be taken out of that area only for pre-arranged displays and returned there immediately afterwards.

No person carrying a weapon (whether blank-firing or de-activated) will be allowed entry to any zone controlled by the Gendarmerie or National Police without the express permission of the organizing entity.

In addition, no armed vehicle will be permitted to approach within 100 metres of any place where a ceremony is taking place attended by French or other dignitaries without express authorisation from the authorities.

In a spirit of historical realism, all weapons carried must be representative of those that were issued to soldiers in the period being portrayed.

Weapons must be handled in a responsible manner and any threatening behaviour may result in prosecution.

Weapon handling and drill must only be carried out under the direction of a competent group leader and with the local authority's full agreement.

In addition to the provisions set out above, foreign collectors and re-enactors importing historic weapons into France must respect all the usual formalities, especially vis-à-vis the Customs authorities. They must have with them the required certification from their own country and present it to the police when requested.

Appendix five (5) Vehicles

In accordance with the provisions of Article seven (7) of the charter, the mayor, and any person to whom s/he delegates such authority, shall have the power to deny entry to any location by any vehicle that fails to comply with the regulations and historical requirements set out below.

All historic military vehicles involved in a re-enactment event must be in a good mechanical condition and must comply with the French highway code regarding registration, MOT certificates and insurance.

Their drivers must hold a licence allowing them to drive that category of vehicle. They must undertake to scrupulously obey the highway code and pay particular attention to the safety of members of the public when driving within the site of an event or display.

The appearance of vehicles must be historically accurate and as authentic as possible; we remind everyone that vehicle markings were not simply decoration and were applied according to strict regulations. If markings are copied from a period photograph of a vehicle, the vehicle must be an exact replica of the one in the photograph.

Tracked vehicles must have either rubber tracks or rubber track protectors, and must not be driven on public roads without the express permission of the Prefecture.

Vehicle movement in convoy

All convoys of historic military vehicles must be authorised beforehand, in order to avoid traffic jams, hindrance to traffic and any other problem on the roads. Any unauthorised convoy may be stopped and ordered to take an alternative route by the police.

Except during the re-enactment of specific events, vehicles in convoy must have dipped headlights in order to be more visible to other road users and to the convoy leader, who must have been designated prior to departure.

In case of breakdown, only the vehicle immediately following the broken-down vehicle must stop to offer assistance. Other vehicles must continue until such time as the convoy leader is able to stop the whole convoy safely, without danger to those in the convoy or to other road users.

Sirens will not be used without the order of the convoy leader, and then only with the agreement of the authorities.

The leaders of convoys representing Allied vehicles must ensure that vehicles do not display flags in an extravagant and unrealistic manner.

Convoys of foreign vehicles

The movement of a convoy of foreign vehicles on French soil also requires compliance with the regulations set out below.

Vehicles must be insured by a company based in their country of origin and recognised in France, and the owners must have their certificate of motor insurance with them at all times.

Any group or independent collector or re-enactor wishing to drive on French soil in one or more historic military vehicle must have it registered and obtain a dated AIMG certificate (authorisation for importation of military equipment, weapons and ammunition).

An exemption to this requirement is granted for temporary imports of heavy military equipment.

Tracked vehicles must be transported in France on wheeled vehicles fitted with tyres in compliance with Article R 314-1 of the French Highway Code.

Groups or individuals must provide the French Customs authority with a detailed list of vehicles coming into France and their location during their stay in France. This will minimise the delay on entry.

In addition, the following must be sent to the Customs authority, Prefecture and Gendarmerie:

The convoy's itinerary in France,
The list of vehicles and their registration numbers,
The names, addresses and passport numbers of all drivers and passengers,
Planned activities during their visit,
Copies of requests for convoy movements, including dates, times etc.

For armed vehicles, the vehicle serial numbers painted on the bodywork must also be supplied.

Special instruction

The owners of vehicles subject to the provisions of Appendix 4 of this charter must comply with the regulations set out in said appendix.