

"FROM D-DAY TO THE BULGE"

FOLLOW THE 101ST & 82ND AIRBORNE
DIVISIONS FROM NORMANDY TO BASTOGNE

25 AUG – 6 SEP 2023

TOUR LEADERS: COL RICH YODER, USMC(RET)
MHT EUROPEAN HISTORIAN
SHAYNE JAROSZ, USMC MHT VP OF EDUCATION

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Omaha Beach, 6 June 1944 - H+5

Join MHT's D-Day to the Bulge Tour for 2023! MHT has expanding our traditional D-Day tour to include the World War II Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and a taste of WWI. Of all the battles fought by United States in Europe during WWII, these two are considered the most significant.

D-Day - June 6th, 1944. It has been 79 years but few events have galvanized a population and stirred the imagination like D-Day. As dawn broke over the beaches, thousands of real-life "Private Ryans", British, French, Canadians and Americans, left the relative safety of their landing craft and stormed ashore to begin the Liberation of France. We will be there for the Official June 6th Ceremonies after starting the day on the invasion beaches.

The Battle of the Bulge (16 December 1944 – 25 January 1945) was the last major German offensive campaign of WWII on the Western Front. It was launched through the densely forested Ardennes region of Wallonia in Belgium, France, and Luxembourg as a last gamble to halt the Allies advance. The surprise attack caught the Allied forces completely off guard. U.S. forces bore the brunt of the attack and incurred their highest casualties for any operation during the war but held the Nazi columns and turned the tide for the invasion of Germany.

MILITARY HISTORICAL TOURS is proud to offer another in our series of signature European Battlefield Tours. Our tours include exclusive MHT tour booklet & sites other tours bypass. All of these things, along with the most experienced staff of Program Directors, Battlefield Tour Leaders and Historians will combine to make your trip the most enjoyable, relaxing, entertaining and educational experience possible. We welcome your phone calls or e-mails to discuss your tour with one of our Battlefield Specialists. Call us at 703-590-1295 we look forward to hearing from you!

Daily Itinerary

Day 1 – 25 Aug – Departure. Depart your hometown airport for an International Portal for the flight to Charles De Gaulle Airport Paris (CDG). Dinner and a continental breakfast served aboard.

Day 2 - 26 Aug - Arrival in France. Arrive at CDG and make your way to our conveniently-located airport hotel. MHT will provide a one night accommodations for two (with breakfast) in our airport hotel the night before your tour formally begins. You can be assured that once you arrive at the hotel, MHT will handle all the details for the remainder of your trip. A complimentary **Wine Welcome** is planned for early evening where you will meet the other D-Day tour participants. **Meeting Hotel: Hilton Paris CDG Airport.**

Day 3 - 27 Aug - Normandy A Time Travel to WWII. After Breakfast, we head for **Rouen**, the capital of Normandy. What makes this city unique is its incredible Gothic architecture coupled with half-timbered medieval street houses. A stroll through the quaint old streets feels like a walk back in time. **Cathédrale Notre-Dame.** In the heart of the old town, it is one of the largest and most impressive

Tour Price: \$ 4,695*

(Based on Double Occupancy)

Single Room Supplement: \$ 1,500*

Tour Price Includes:

4-Star Hotel Accommodations in CDG-Paris, Bastogne, Caen-Normandy & Paris

*

Air-conditioned deluxe motorcoach with onboard restroom

*

Meals as indicated in itinerary

*

Historical trip information packet, containing maps & other tour information.

*

Admission fees to all sites, museums and special attractions listed

*

Services of experienced Tour Leader and English-speaking local guides.

Airfare not included: Get your own or Book Optional MHT Airfare: Round-trip economy or business class airfare from your hometown to Paris CDG price quoted upon registration!

* - Price based on € conversion rate at final billing



Gothic cathedrals in France. The cathedral's main structure was built in the 13th century but the building was not completed until the 16th century. **Tour du Gros-Horloge (Big Clock Tower).** The huge decorative clock dates from 1889 and still serves its timekeeping functions for the city. **Joan of Arc.** Joan was captured by Anglo-Burgundian forces, tried for witchcraft and heresy and burned at the stake in 1431 in the Rouen City Square. We check-in to our Caen Hotel. **Hotel: Best Western Plue Le Moderne, Caen. Meals: B-Included. L & D - On Own.**

Days 4 - 7 - 28 - 31 Aug - Normandy. Our hotel in Caen or Bayeux will be our home base for exploring Normandy. **Omaha Beach** was the most intensely contested beach on D-Day. It is six miles wide – the largest of all the five beaches. The entire beach was overlooked by cliffs which made attacking the area very difficult. You will walk the sands where the liberation of France began 79 years ago. **29th Infantry Division.** Our tour will include the seawall, bunkers, and other German defenses along the beach. The western half of the beach was assigned to the untested US 29th Infantry Division. Vierville Draw where the 29th landed was featured in both "The Longest Day" and "Saving Private Ryan." **1st Infantry Division.** The eastern half of the beach was assigned to battle-hardened 1st Infantry Division. The Big Red One stormed ashore and began fighting for its life on a strip of beach near Coleville-sur-Mer that had been marked the "Easy Red" on battle maps. Slowly, spurred by the individual heroism of many individuals, the move inland got underway. **Pointe du Hoc.** The 2nd Ranger Battalion scaled the 100-foot cliffs to eliminate the German heavy guns that could threaten both Utah and Omaha beaches. At a high cost, they successfully defended against determined German counterattacks for two days. The Pointe du Hoc Ranger Monument was erected by the French to honor the incredible courage of the Rangers. **American Airborne Landings.** In the early hours of June 6, 1944, the American airborne forces successfully executed some of the most difficult and challenging missions of D-Day. Their objectives were to secure the invasion right flank against German counterattacks and secure the causeways off Utah Beach. **82nd Airborne Division.** Paratroopers of the 82nd were to capture objectives in the area west of the Allied amphibious invasion, specifically the town of Sainte-Mère-Eglise and the La Fière bridge. **Ste Mere Eglise.** Another site made famous by the film, "The Longest Day." A mannequin of a paratrooper hangs from the church spire. **The Airborne Forces Museum** has a C-47 troop transport aircraft that flew in the invasion and a rare WACO glider on display. **101st Airborne Division.** The 101st Airborne Division's objectives were to secure the four causeway exits behind Utah Beach to ensure the exit route for the 4th Infantry Division from the beach later that morning. **Brecourt Manor.** The 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment's assault by Easy Company on the German howitzer battery that was disrupting the exit leading off Utah Beach was immortalized in the series "Band of Brothers". It is often cited as a classic example of small-unit tactics and leadership in overcoming a larger enemy force.

Utah Beach. The westernmost of the five landing beaches. The beach was situated on the east at the edge of a marshland zone which had been flooded by the Germans. Only four causeways could be used to cross this marshland and reach inland. **4th Infantry Division.** The objective of the 4th, supported by airborne landings of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, was to



Veteran "Bangs" Tosline with "Big Red One" re-enactors at Normandy Cemetery on D-Day.

secure a beachhead on the Cotentin Peninsula. The division only lost 197 men during the day and by the night of the 6th of June, 20,000 men and 1,700 vehicles were ashore. It was for his actions that day that Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Assistant Division Commander, earned the first Medal of Honor of the division. **Utah Beach D-Day Museum.**

Built on the very beach where the first American troops landed. A restored, original B26 "Marauder" bomber is among the displays.

Overlord Museum. This privately-owned museum just outside the Cemetery gate chronicles the period of the Allied landing until the liberation of Paris. The collection was assembled by someone who was both a witness to the conflict and involved in the reconstruction of Normandy. Personal items from individual soldiers and armored fighting vehicles from the six armies in Normandy are presented in set displays showing over 35 vehicles, tanks and guns. **La Cambe.** At the somber German military cemetery at La Cambe, 21,500 German troops are buried, including Tiger Tank "Ace" Michael Wittmann. The design contrast with the Normandy American Cemetery is striking. **Pegasus Bridge and Museum.** The bridges across the River Orne and the Caen canal had to be captured and held intact to enable the seaborne reinforcements to cross. The result was textbook example of a successful operation. **German Merville Battery.** The gun battery had to be put out of action. The 100mm caliber guns could fire down on to Sword Beach and the Allied fleet off the coast. Although successful, it was a nearly disastrous operation. On display is a restored C-47 aircraft from D-day. **Sword, Juno, Gold Beaches.** Drive along the British and Canadian landing beaches. Contrast the terrain differences between these beaches and Omaha/Utah beaches to be visited later. **Arromanches.** The remains of one of the two artificial "Mulberry" harbors erected in the landing operation may still be seen. **Port-en-Bessin.** A picturesque fishing port that was home to one of the 'Pipelines Under the Sea' (PLUTO) pumping stations.

Longes-sur-Mer The German coastal defense battery at, probably the best remaining example of such a battery in Normandy. **Bayeux.** The first city of the Battle of Normandy to be liberated, and on 16 June 1944 General Charles de Gaulle made the first of two major speeches in Bayeux in which he made clear that France sided with the Allies. The buildings in Bayeux were virtually untouched during the Battle of Normandy, the German forces being fully involved in defending Caen from the Allies. **Hotel: Best Western Plue Le Moderne, Caen. Meals: B-Included daily. L & D - On Own.**

Day 8 - 1 Sep - A Time Travel WWII to WWI - Bastogne. Today we make the long drive to Reims. On the way we will stop at the "Armistice Clearing" near Compiegne and a walk through the small museum housing a sister coach to Marshal Foch's "Surrender Carriage" where WWI essentially ended and where the French capitulated to Hitler in June 1940. In a way, it is the place where WWI ended and WWII began. Our next stop is the **Oise-Aisne American Cemetery and Memorial** contains the remains of 6,012 American war dead, most of whom lost their lives while fighting in this vicinity



in 1918 during World War I. The memorial is a curving colonnade, flanked at the ends by a chapel and a map room. It is built of rose-colored sandstone with white trim bearing sculptured details of wartime equipment. The chapel contains an altar of carved stone. Engraved upon its Walls of the Missing are 241 names. The map room contains an engraved and colored wall map portraying the military operations in this region during 1918. Our route will take us to **Chateau-Thierry** scene of the massive First Battle of the Marne, Second Battle of the Marne and 3rd Infantry Division battlefield. We move on to the iconic **Battle of Belleau Wood** with its beautiful memorials and the famed Bulldog Fountain and "Iron Mike" statute. Afterward, we head to Reims with a brief stop at the spectacular **Reims Cathedral** before a group dinner at fun Brasserie Excelsior. **Hotel: Reims Holiday Inn Centre. Meals: B & D - Included. L - On Own.**

Day 9 - 2 Sept - World War I. Our route will take us eastward through the beautiful countryside that once was a shell-scarred wasteland crisscrossed with French and German trench lines. The terrain feature known as the Plateau Chemin des Dames was the scene of fruitless attacks and stalemate. After The Great War, France faced a changed strategic situation. Consequently, France conceived of the **Magnot Line**, a line of concrete fortifications, obstacles and weapon installations constructed during the 1930s. We will take a two hour underground tour of **Fort du Hackenberg**, the largest single fort in the line with its 1000-man garrison. This is a real journey back in time and into the history of one of the most formidable fortifications of the 20th Century. Afterward, we journey to Bastogne, Belgium, with a brief stop at the **Luxembourg American Cemetery** where we pause to pay our respects to the fallen, including the late General George S. Patton Jr. **Hotel: Melba AV. Mathieu Bastogne. Meals: B & L—Included. D—On Own.**



Days 10 & 11 - 3 & 4 Sept - Battle of the Bulge. MHT is most fortunate to have as our local guide, Henri Mignon, a retired artillery officer of the Belgian Army. His family used to live in a small village north of Bastogne, in an area reoccupied by the German SS during the Battle of the Bulge. Though only 10 years old, he clearly recalls the hardships of the fighting and especially the day when his father was killed by an artillery round while getting the family water from the farm well. In the

three days we are with Henri, we will visit McAuliffe Square with its famous Sherman tank, the **Bastogne Historical Center**, the "foxholes" of the "Easy Company" (made famous in "Band of Brothers"), the German Cemetery in Recogne, the "**Siegfried Line**" with its signature "**Dragon's Teeth**," the site of the infamous "**Malmedy Massacre**" and one of only 11 German "**King**" **Tiger II** tanks remaining in the world. Henri will have special access to the Belgium military base from where General McAuliffe sent his famous reply, "NUTS!" to the German surrender demand 1945. **Hotel: Melba AV. Mathieu Bastogne. Meals: B - Included daily. L & D – On Own.**

Day 12 - 5 Sept - Drive to Paris. We will bid farewell to the Bulge and head for Paris. We have our farewell dinner in Paris **Hotel: Concorde Montparnasse. Meals: B & D - Included. L - On Own.**

Day 13 - 6 Sept. Individual departure on your own schedule to the airport for your return flight to the USA, arriving the same day. Or stay an extra day or two in the City of Lights at \$250 per day. **Meals: B - Included.**

