



2024 D-Day Experience Normandy

Newsletter January 2024

The German Defences in Normandy



On our first historic tour we focus on the German defence works of the Atlantic Wall in Normandy, where the US 29th Infantry Division and the US Rangers had to create a foothold on D-Day and expand it in order to connect the US Divisions on the right and on the left flank. We start the day at Pointe-du-Hoc, a German strongpoint strategically located at the top of 100 feet high cliffs, that with its 155mm guns was a feared threat for the incoming fleet and the troops landing on Omaha Beach.



The second German strongpoint in this area was situated more to the west. From the sea it was perfectly hidden behind the dunes around Grandcamp-Maisy. British air patrols spotted the strongpoint, but the American planners of D-Day assumed it was no threat. Was this a mistake and why was the strongpoint covered with earth afterwards? After 60 years the site was uncovered and you can now explore more than 6 miles of trenches and bunkers of this German strongpoint.

Explore the taste of Normandy

Our lunch that day is served by our caterer in a typical French farm with a courtyard, owned by the Dutch Jaschke and his French wife Diana who run a charming B&B.



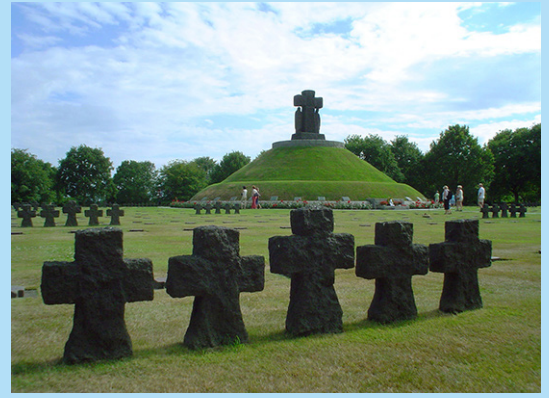
The B&B Le Clos de Bas Courtil

To complete your experience of the French life in this region the well-known producer Romilly offers especially for us a Cider-tasting. At their 1.000 year

old farm they brew Cidres from soft to extra dry and even rosé, handcrafted with love of the apples from their orchards in the Calvados region.

German War Cemetery

Finally that day we visit the German War Cemetery La Cambe. In Normandy 80,000 German soldiers lost their lives, of which 21,200 are buried at La Cambe, making it the largest German War Cemetery in Normandy. In the information centre at La Cambe you can learn more about German officers, who played a significant but often also a dubious role in the battles for Normandy, from the tank-ace Michael Wittmann to the ruthless Adolf Diekmann.



Our second tour: the medics of 101st AB

The second historic tour starts with a focus on the medics in the 101st Airborne Division. In Angoville-au-Plain we visit the church where the medics Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore set up a First Aid Post, while the fights were raging around the church for days. You still can see the traces of blood on the benches of the church.



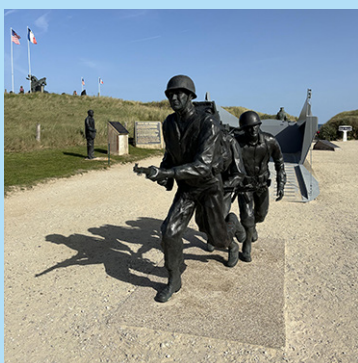
Driving through the area where the gliders of 101st AB landed, we visit the remnants of Château Colombières. This castle was selected to directly on D-Day establish a surgical hospital for the wounded soldiers of 101st and 82nd AB. Though many gliders crash landed, the doctors and paramedics of 326th Airborne Medical Company, as well as most equipment and medical supplies could be salvaged rather intact. They arrived at the castle at 07:00 and thanks to the French family the hospital was operational within two hours! Unfortunately three

days later the castle was hit by German bombs. Deliberately...?

The medical teams managed anyhow to keep the hospital running. A group of re-enactors will show us in 2024 how that was done.

Easy Company at Brécourt Manor

On our way to Utah Beach we pass Brécourt Manoir, well-known by the series 'Band of Brothers' where (then) 1st Lt. Dick Winters with 12 paras fought his first battle to eliminate four 105mm gun emplacements connected by trenches. We stop a moment at the monument for Easy Company 506PIR.



Utah Beach

At Utah Beach we take enough time to explore the area, where Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt Jr, assistant-commander of the 4th Infantry Division, in the first wave savely landed east of the supposed spot, due to the strong tides. Reporting this to the other two battalions with the words: "We'll start the war from right here!", he saved many lives that day. For this he was recommended for a Distinguished Service Cross.

A month after the invasion however, he died of a heart attack and was awarded with a Medal of Honor. He is buried at the American Normandy Cemetery at Plot D, Row 28, Grave 45, next to his brother, Quentin, who was killed during WWI.

We conclude this tour with a visit of the small village Ste. Marie-du-Mont, that was liberated by paras of 501PIR. At 13:00 contact was established between the paras and the infantry of the 4th Infantry Division.

Evening of music and a light show over Omaha Beach



In the evening the week of celebrations and commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy will be started at Vierville-sur-Mer with a festive program.

On Saturday June 1st, 2024 there will be concerts of bands, playing music from the '40's till the '70's. There are food trucks, where you can buy food and drinks.

To conclude the evening a spectacular light show with drones or fireworks above the sea is performed.. What a great start of the memorable days of our D-Day Normandy Experience!

Sleeping in a tent used in the film Charles de Gaulle ...?



In 2023 Antonin Baudry shot footage for the movie 'Charles de Gaulle', the legendary French army officer who led the French army in exile during WW2. He was recognized by the British as the leader of the Free French Forces, led the French resistance against Nazi Germany, walked the streets of Paris as its liberator and eventually became president of France after WW2

For the movie a military camp with tents was needed for footage of Charles de Gaulle visiting French troops in Normandy after the invasion. We are in close contact with the supplier of those 'props' to purchase the tents. So during our BAIV D-Day Normandy Experience 2024 you could rent a Small Wall Tent (officer's tent) and sleep in private quarters that were used in the film 'Charles de Gaulle'.



Our food is in good hands of Dave and his team



Because of our good experiences we have invited legerkeuken.nl again to take care of our breakfast buffets and our diners in the evening. Dave and his team guarantee us to serve a varied menu of tasteful and healthy food during our BAIV D-Day Normandy Experience 2024.



Depending the program of the historical tours they provide us with well-filled and varied lunch boxes or serve lunch in the field during the historical tour. We look forward to enjoy their cooking, service and enthusiasm.