

# Visit Normandy in 2019

June 2019 sees the 75th anniversary of the largest amphibious landing the world has ever seen. The landing operations took place on five beaches on Tuesday, June 6, 1944 to start the Allied invasion of Normandy in Operation Overlord during World War Two. Codenamed Operation Neptune, and generally referred to as D-Day, it began the liberation of German-occupied France and subsequently the rest of western Europe from Nazi control. The landings and associated airborne drops have left a huge legacy in Normandy so there is plenty for visitors to see and the 75th anniversary will witness numerous special events including military vehicle gatherings. This guide will help you plan your visit.

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- **News about Normandy in 2019**
- **Exclusive Normandy invasion map**
- **Museums and Memorials to visit**



# Be Prepared

If you are hoping to join in with the D-Day commemorations in Normandy next year, then **Vicky Turner** has a few ideas to help you plan your trip

**B**eginning on June 6, 1944, the liberation of occupied Europe was initiated through the invasion of Normandy: the D-day landings remain the single biggest amphibious assault in history.

The operation's impact on turning the tide of war and laying the foundations for allied victory on the Western Front cannot be underestimated. The high level of planning and the subterfuge that went into the build-up, the immense scale and sheer audacity of the plan itself,

forms part of the most incredible moments of 20th century history.

On the night of June 5, some 24,000 British, American and Canadian airborne forces were dropped behind enemy lines. Intense aerial and naval bombardment had set about destroying as much of the heavily weaponised and well-manned German Atlantic Wall defences as possible. As dawn broke on the morning of June 6, allied forces then began landing on the 50-mile stretch of the French coast identified

for the invasion.

Despite suffering heavy casualties and failing to achieve their objectives for day one, the Allies fought against incredible odds to eventually secure and link all the beachheads within a week. This enabled the further advancement into enemy territory and perhaps was the Allies 'finest hour'.

What was achieved on D-Day itself and in the following weeks and months has become the stuff of legend. The courage and bravery of



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and in the following weeks and months  
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the men involved will likely never be forgotten as the stories continue to be passed on down through the ages. It is right and fitting that while some veterans of those times remain, this period is commemorated and remembered with special events and services to acknowledge the sacrifice of those who did not survive and to express gratitude for the liberation of Europe from Nazi tyranny, to those who did.

Perhaps at no other time during World War Two did Churchill's words of 1940 ring more true than of the task ahead of those involved in Operation Overlord: "We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight on the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

### 75th Anniversary

With fewer veterans attending each year and 2019 being the 75th year after Operation Overlord, this next commemoration of the D-Day landings is set to be a particularly poignant and well attended by politicians, military figures as well the public and owners of military vehicles. Numerous events and festivities are planned



**ABOVE: The Invasion of Normandy was kept supplied by these Mulberry Harbours designed for the rapid offloading of cargo onto the beaches**

**TOP: Dutch Harley-Davidson at Vierville Sur Mere Omaha Museum**

**MAIN IMAGE: Remains of the Mulberry Harbour pontoon can be seen at Gold Beach, Arromanches, June 2018**

such as parades, firework displays, airdrops, military camp reenactments and services to remember those who served.

There are of course numerous organised tours you may choose to join if you don't want to plan your own itinerary and accommodation.

There is a wide variety of choice on offer from simple single-day walking tours of the cemeteries to the full week, accommodation, food, scheduled activities and transport all arranged for you. Consequently, there is large variation in pricing of these trips so it is well worth doing your research.

There are many independent outfits offering battlefield tours and these people can often provide a highly tailored and personalised service, they are usually very knowledgeable enthusiasts and dedicated to ensuring you get the most out of your visit.

As well as these individuals, there are plenty of tour operators who specialise in offering Normandy D-Day packages many of which depart the UK in coaches. Heading to your local travel agent, or a search online is the best place to start finding out the planned schedules, departure points, costs and availability.

### Military Vehicle Tours

In our sphere, there are two main points of contact if you wish to join an organised tour,







ABOVE: Vehicles on Gold Beach during the ceremony outside the museum at Arromanches  
 BELOW RIGHT: Gun outside the museum at Utah Beach  
 BELOW: With fewer and fewer veterans attending each year, those that do are treated as royalty



#### D-DAY VETERANS INVITED TO REGISTER FOR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

**On the 74th anniversary of the Normandy Landings veterans of D-Day were invited to register to take part in commemorations planned for June 2019**

The Royal British Legion is working with partners including the UK Government, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Normandy Memorial Trust and the Spirit of Normandy Trust to plan significant commemorations to mark D-Day 75 both in France and the UK.

Contacting the Royal British Legion or registering on the legion's D-Day 75 website will enable the partners to communicate with veterans and their families as plans are confirmed and more details are released. Last year, the prime minister announced funding for the new memorial in Normandy. The prime minister and French president Emmanuel Macron will attend the inauguration of the project in June next year as part of the 75th anniversary commemorations. [www.britishlegion.org.uk/communi-ty/d-day-75/](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/communi-ty/d-day-75/)



possibly even with your own military vehicle. Both the Military Vehicle Trust (MVT) and the Invicta Military Preservation Society (IMPS) are arranging discounted travel and accommodation, as well as involvement in some of the commemorative events for their members and participants on their tours.

#### IMPS

The Invicta Military Preservation Society has been organising tours to Normandy in the first week of June for some time - they do it for every fifth anniversary, so are well versed in what works, how long things take to get to and to experience. The event next year is already fully subscribed but you may be lucky and secure a place if someone drops out.

Planning is well underway. The campsite is already booked and several guided tours around the region have already been organised with experienced experts. IMPS are linking up with local groups and the MVT to participate in the commemorations, including parades in Port en Bessin and Bayeux.

Participants will be travelling to/from France via Portsmouth/Caen. The outward crossings will be either the overnight ferry leaving Sunday June 2 or the daytime crossing on Monday, June 3. The return crossings will be on Monday, June 10: a duration of seven nights.

IMPS have reserved a campsite located mid-way along the landing beaches. This makes it easy to visit all the sites relevant to Operation Overlord and the breakout. It provides a very high standard of facilities, with both camping and on-site cabins available, it has an on-site swimming pool, excellent showers, a bar/cafe

area and great access for the larger vehicles.

A provisional schedule for 2019 is as follows:

**Sunday June 2 – Overnight ferry to Caen Monday June 3 – Book in to campsite Tuesday June 4 – Hidden Normandy Tour Wednesday June 5 – Pointe du Hoc Tour Thursday June 6 – Arromanches Beach Tour Friday June 7 – Port-en-Bessin Parade Saturday June 8 – Operation Epsom Tour Sunday June 9 – Bayeux Parade and Tilly-sur-Seuilles Monday June 10 – return ferry to Portsmouth**

Email Gareth Wear for more details.

[gareth\\_wear@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gareth_wear@yahoo.co.uk) and <https://www.imps.org.uk>

#### MVT

Also well practiced in arranging visits to Normandy, the MVT offer variously timed ferry sailings at MVT discounted rates from Poole to Cherbourg return, Plymouth to Roscoff return



Locals and visitors from all over the world will congregate together in Normandy to pay their respects in this next big anniversary year





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: US Navy-liveried DUKW on the beach in the sea fog of the 74th Anniversary of D-Day; After several days of rain the campsites became a mud bath in 2018 – there are hopes for a slightly drier forecast for 2019; Shaun Hindle with his Universal Carrier, one of the few British vehicles that was seen in Normandy in June this year - this is likely not to be the case in 2019; French Kubelwagen representing German vehicles; This memorial marks the spot where 6th-9th members of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment and 325th Glider Regiment fought to hold the bridge in La Fiere



and Portsmouth to Caen return. To take advantage of the specially discounted rates, booking for these services must be made through Colin Smith who can be reached via the email: [ferries.tour2019@mvt.org.uk](mailto:ferries.tour2019@mvt.org.uk).

Spaces are reserved for MVT members and their vehicles at the Etreham campsite. This year, the tour has already sold out but it is one to consider for future anniversaries.

The MVT is reminding people that they will need an OGEL licence for the temporary export of a military vehicle; this used to be called SPIRES, but with the system going digital the name has changed. More info can be found at [www.importexportlicensing.blog.gov.uk](http://www.importexportlicensing.blog.gov.uk)

**So simple now to drive down the slip and onto the beach but the blood lost here is always on the mind**



## FOR MORE INFORMATION YOU MAY FIND SOME OF THE FOLLOWING LINKS USEFUL...

### GETTING THERE

#### By ferry:

With several departure points, destinations and packages across a few ferry operators shopping around is advisable:

[www.brittany-ferries.co.uk](http://www.brittany-ferries.co.uk)

[www.dfsseaways.co.uk](http://www.dfsseaways.co.uk)

[www.poferries.com](http://www.poferries.com)

There are also a couple of price comparison sites that have a search function to compare the available ferries from all operators at your chosen port between the UK and France.

[www.aferry.co.uk](http://www.aferry.co.uk)

[www.directferries.co.uk](http://www.directferries.co.uk)

#### By Train:

Departing at all hours from Folkestone, London St Pancras, Ashford and Ebbsfleet you are bound to find a convenient crossing here:

[www.eurotunnel.com](http://www.eurotunnel.com)

[www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)

It is, of course, possible to travel by bus or by

plane but the operators are too many to list here, the best place to start would be via the internet or travel agent.

### ACCOMMODATION

Details of 35 campsites near the D-Day landing beaches can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y8ax7ln6>

For cottages and gites try these:

[www.cheznous.com/holiday-cottages-normandy.aspx](http://www.cheznous.com/holiday-cottages-normandy.aspx)

[www.cottages.com/france/normandy](http://www.cottages.com/france/normandy)

[www.holidayfrancedirect.co.uk/cottages-holidays/normandy-holidays](http://www.holidayfrancedirect.co.uk/cottages-holidays/normandy-holidays)

### EVENTS

Not all the times, dates and venues have been announced yet but there are plenty of websites around offering to collate the information into a calendar, as and when it becomes available, nearer the time:

[www.dday-overlord.com/en/normandy/com-memorations/2019](http://www.dday-overlord.com/en/normandy/com-memorations/2019)

Keep an eye on the Juno Beach Centre's page where updates relating to the 75th anniversary of D-Day will be posted.

Also note that the Juno Beach Centre will be closed for visiting on June 5 and 6, 2019 due to ceremonies taking place.

[www.junobeach.org](http://www.junobeach.org)

Events on over the course of the first week in June at St Mere Eglise can be researched here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y97dclsh>

And at Carentan here (including details of planned para drops June 8 and 9)

[www.ot-baieducotentin.fr/en/d-day-1944](http://www.ot-baieducotentin.fr/en/d-day-1944)

The French tourist board is also a good place to get information, try

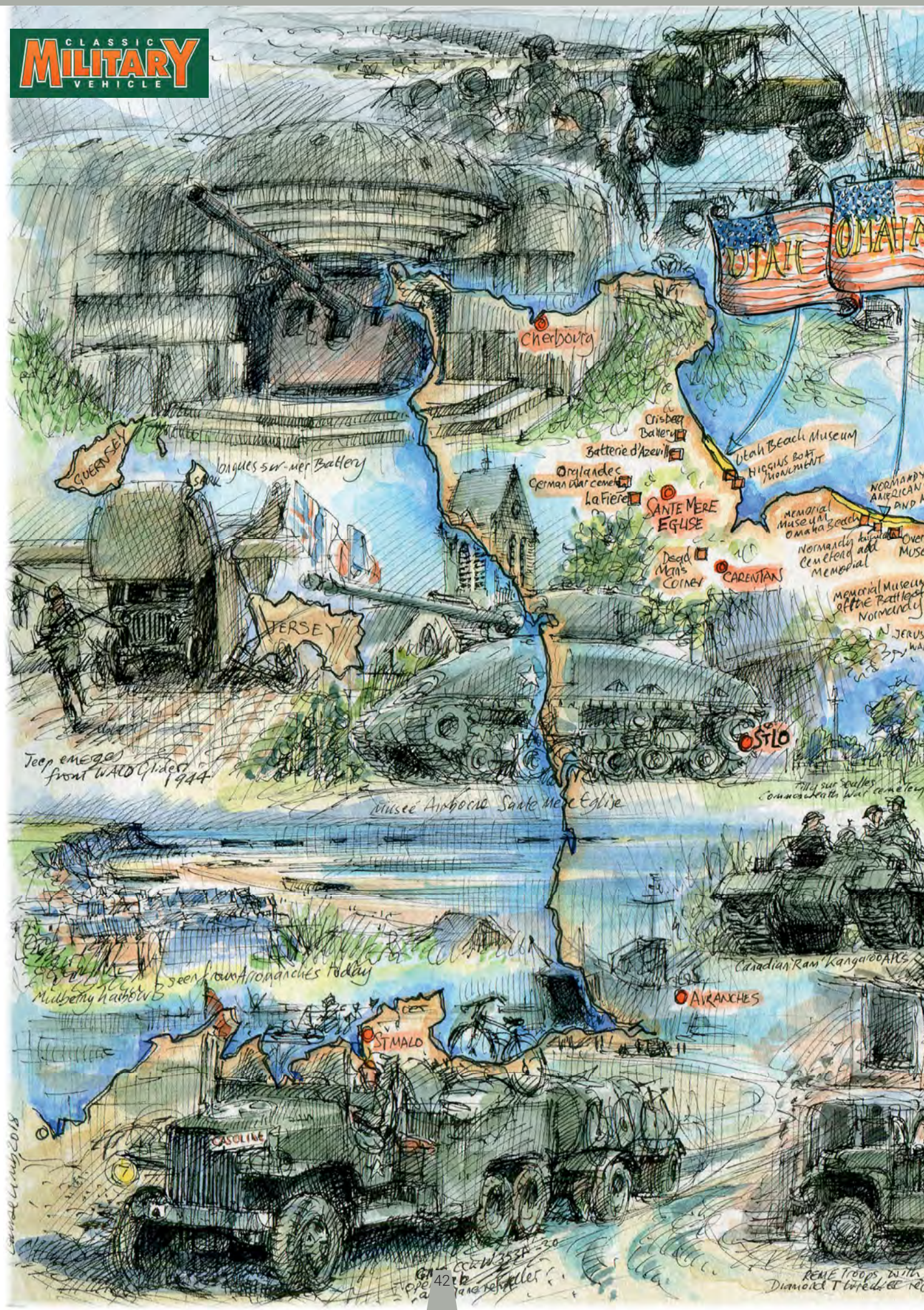
<https://tinyurl.com/yd7l85h4>

For information about aerial displays on June 4 and 5 see

[www.daksovernormandy.com/airborne-jumps/](http://www.daksovernormandy.com/airborne-jumps/)

**NB:** High-tide at Arromanches is at 12.30am on June 6 - this means if you plan a pilgrimage, you need to be clear of the beach by 10.30am











# 41 places to visit in *Normandy*

The five D-Day landing beaches and parachute drop zones stretch west to east for approximately 80 miles.

Here are 41 places that are well worth a visit

## Utah Beach

### 1. 2nd French Armoured Division Landing Monument

50480 Saint-Martin-de-Varreville, Manche

This is a monument to General Leclerc's 2e Division Blindée (2e DB) (2nd Armoured Division) of the Free French Army. They landed on this

stretch of Utah beach on August 1, 1944 as part of XV Corps of Lieutenant General George S Patton's Third Army. Later that month, 2e DB participated in the Battle of the Falaise Pocket, which inflicted a major defeat on the German Army. Adjacent to the monument is a Sherman tank, a Greyhound M8 armoured car and a M3 half-track in FFI markings.

### 2. Airborne Museum, Sainte-Mère-Eglise

14 Rue Eisenhower,







2nd French Armoured Division Landing Monument

### 50480 Sainte-Mère-Eglise

This museum - Musée Airborne - is dedicated to the American paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions who parachuted into Normandy on the night of June 5-6, 1944. It was opened in 1964 - the 20th anniversary of D-Day - by General Ridgway (commanding general of the 82nd in 1944), and General James M Gavin. The WACO building, shaped like a large parachute shroud, contains an authentic WACO glider, the only example in France. This building is located on the same spot as the house which caught fire on the night of June 5, 1944, as shown in the movie *The Longest Day*. A second parachute-shaped building was opened in 1984 and covers a C-47 plane. For the 70th anniversary of D-Day, a third building named



Airborne Museum, Sainte-Mère-Eglise

Operation Neptune, opened to the public after being inaugurated in the presence of veterans of World War Two.

### 3. Azeville Battery

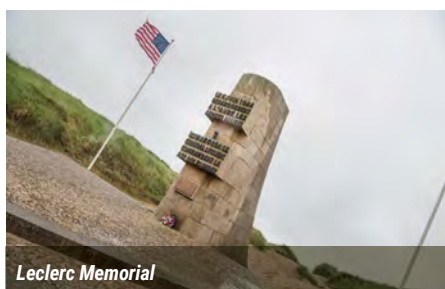
*Lieu-dit la Rue, 50310 Azeville*

Despite the absence of its 155mm guns, the German coastal battery at Azeville is an impressive complex to visit. Part of the Atlantic Wall, it is relatively well preserved, and on some of the bunkers the original camouflage paint can still be seen. Visitors embark on a journey through the narrow and dimly-lit communication tunnels that link various bunkers and



Azeville Battery

rooms and even cross beneath the road to an adjacent field. There are small openings which permit a view of the outside world on the other side of the thick concrete walls. At other stops you can climb into one of the 'Tobruks' a defensive machine gun position. Above ground it is possible to view the casemates of two different designs. North of Utah beach, the casemates were hit by shells from the USS Nevada on the night of June 8-9.



Leclerc Memorial

### 4. Charles De Gaulle Liberation Memorial

*Avenue de la Combattante, 14470 Courseulles-sur-Mer, Calvados*

On June 14, 1944, General Charles De Gaulle, leader of the free French, landed at Courseulles-sur-Mer in the torpedo boat *La Combattante* and headed for Bayeux where he gave a speech (see Bayeux).

### 5. D-Day Experience (Dead Man's Corner)

*2 Village de l'Amont, 50500 Saint-Côme-du-Mont*

Located near Saint-Côme-du-Mont, the older of the buildings at the museum and the land upon which it sits has as much historical significance as the artefacts displayed within. On the night of June 6, 1944 it was occupied by German paratroopers or Fallschirmjäger. The term 'Dead Man's Corner' derives from an event when a US tank commander, Lt Walter

T Anderson, was killed

here. Founded in 2004 the D-day Experience began as a small exhibition with a couple of life-sized dioramas and US Airborne exhibits. It has expanded considerably since 2015 and continues to be developed with a new structure housing both the main collection of exhibits along with a unique flight simulator incorporated into the fuselage of a genuine C-47 aircraft. This aircraft, in the colours of those that carried members of the 101st Airborne Division to Drop Zone D as part of Operation Neptune, has been partly restored and partly converted into a flight simulator. After being briefed by a 3D hologram of an actor dressed as Lt Col Robert L Wolverton, visitors are taken aboard the 'Stoy Hora' and instructed to strap in. Another highlight is the Jeep inside a section of Waco CG-4 that has been stripped of its canvas skin to reveal the complexity and fragility of these gliders. As the museum continues to develop, 2019 will see the addition of a movie theatre.

### 6. Higgins Boat Monument

*2 Utah Beach, 50480 Sainte-Marie-du-Mont*

A monument to the Higgins boat (LCVP) of which 1,089 took part in D-Day, the monument is located next to the Utah Beach Museum. The majority of Allied troops initially arriving on the Normandy Beaches landed in one of two craft:



Higgins Boat Monument

the British Landing Craft Assault (LCA) or the American Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel (LCVP) and some 1,089 LCVPs took part in D-Day. Developed by Andrew Jackson Higgins in 1941, the LCVP was built by Higgins Industries in New Orleans. The Higgins Boat, crewed by four personnel, carried up to 36 troops, was capable of up to 12 knots and could be fitted with a pair of Browning M1919 machine guns. By the time of the Normandy landings the LCVP had been used in every theatre of operations including Operation Torch in North Africa, landings in Italy, and in Southern France. It was also used in the Pacific theatre.

### 7. Fièvre Bridge

*La Fièvre, 50480 Sainte-Mère-Eglise*

Running parallel to the shoreline a few miles from Utah Beach, the marshes of the Merderet and Douve rivers formed a natural defensive line protecting the western end of the allied landing zone and at the same time limiting the Allies' potential to break out of the beachhead. Thus control of the bridges at Manoir de la Fièvre and Chef-du-Pont was seen as vital. The Merderet was assigned to the US 82nd Airborne Division as Mission Boston, scheduled for five hours before the amphibious land-

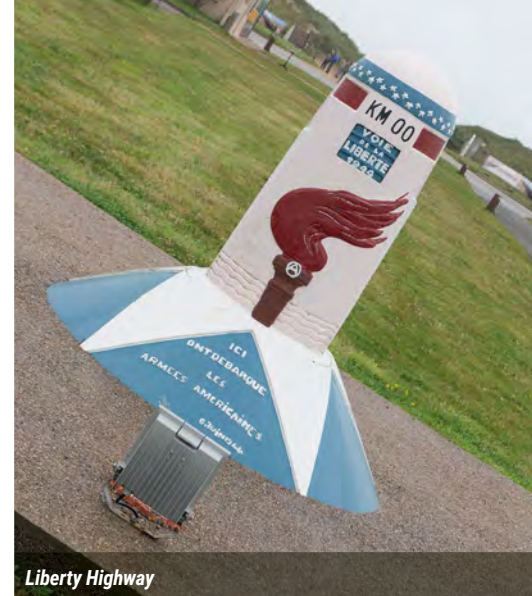


D-Day Experience





**Fiere Bridge**



**Liberty Highway**



**Detail of monument**

ings on D-Day. However cloud cover and German fire caused the landings to be dispersed. The airborne units took the strategic town of Sainte-Mère-Église but failed in their original mission to clear the west bank of the Merderet on D-Day and blow the bridge over the Douze at Pont l'Abbé (now Étienville). Control of the bridges over the Merderet river was disputed, but heroic US actions held off German counterattacks including an attack over the bridge at La Fiere by the 1057th Grenadier Regiment and light tanks of the 100th Panzer Replacement Battalion. This appears to have been the

inspiration for the final battle sequence in the film Saving Private Ryan, which is set around a bridge over the Merderet in the fictional town of Ramelle.

## 8. Liberty Highway

### Utah Beach, 50480 La Madeleine

The Liberty Highway - La voie de la Liberté - is the commemorative way marking of the route of the Allied forces from D-Day in June 1944. It starts at Utah Beach, in the Manche département in Normandy, France, travels through Sainte-Marie-du-Mont across Northern France to Metz and then northwards to end in Bastogne, on the border of Luxembourg and Belgium. At each of the 1,146 kilometres, there is a stone marker or 'Borne' designed by the sculptor François Cogné. This, the first, stands on the landing beach of Utah Beach.

## 9. Musée de la Batterie de Crisbecq

### Route des Manoires, 50310 Saint Marcouf

The Crisbecq Battery, also called the Marcouf Battery, part of the Atlantic Wall, was an artillery battery constructed by the

Todt Organization near the French village of Saint-Marcouf. The main armament was three Czech 21cm Kanone 39 canons, two of which are housed in heavily fortified casemates up to 10ft thick of concrete.

The Battery, with a range of around 20 miles, could cover the beaches between Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue and Pointe du Hoc. Prior to the invasion, the battery was subject to aerial bombardment but was still operational on D-Day: the commander of the Crisbecq battery was the first to see the allied invasion fleet through the battery rangefinder. At 5:55am Crisbecq battery targeted and exchanged fire with US warships and the US destroyer USS Corry. Other US ships intervened and the concentrated fire of three US battleships put the second casemate out of action. One gun remained operational and directed fire on the beach facing WN5 Widerstandsneest 5 (Resistance Nest 5) and caused heavy losses among the Americans and hindered the landing of material and reinforcements at Utah Beach. It wasn't finally captured until June 11.



**Utah Beach...**





Two of the Crisbecq batteries

## 10. Museum of the Crisbecq Batteries Command Post

**Saint Marcouf de l'Isle, 50310 Crisbecq Road**

This is the command post of the daunting Crisbecq Batteries and was created as a museum during the 1990s. Dynamited seven times by the Americans in August 1944, this former command centre remained abandoned and inaccessible from 1944, especially the basement rooms that were flooded for decades. Located in the centre of the batteries, it offered a panoramic viewpoint of the German position, as well as over the beaches it guarded. Here you can learn about the history of the Utah Beach guns during a guided tour of the interior of the Crisbecq Battery Command Post, consisting of 10 rooms and an anti-aircraft turret.



Marcouf museum

## 11. Sainte-Mère-Église

**On the N13**

Sainte-Mère-Église lies in a flat area of the Cotentin peninsula known locally as le Plain. The Plain is bounded on the west by the Merderet River and by the English Channel to the east, and by the communes of Valognes and Carentan to the north and south, respectively. The town's main claim to fame is that it played a significant part in the World War Two Normandy landings because this village stood on route N13, which the Germans could have used to counterattack the landings on Utah and Omaha Beaches.

In the early morning of June 6, 1944 mixed units of the US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions occupied the town in Mission Boston, making it one of the first towns liberated by the invasion. The early landings, at about 01.40 directly on the town, resulted in heavy casualties for the paratroopers.

Some buildings in town were on fire that night, and they illuminated the sky, making easy targets of the descending men. Many hanging from trees and utility poles were shot before they could cut loose. One such incident

involved paratrooper

John Steele of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), whose parachute caught on the spire of the town church, and could only observe the fighting going on below. He hung there for two hours pretending to be dead, before the Germans took him prisoner: the incident was portrayed in the movie *The Longest Day*. Later that morning, the 505th PIR captured the town with little resistance but heavy German counterattacks began later in the day and into the next. The Airborne held the town until reinforced by tanks from nearby Utah Beach on the afternoon of June 7. A mannequin remembering John Steele (1912-1969) hangs from the church tower and a monument to the US Airborne Divisions stands in the town.

## 12. Utah Beach

**Poupeville, La Madeleine, Manche**

Utah was the code name for one of the five sectors of the Allied invasion on D-Day. The westernmost of the five landing beaches in Normandy, Utah is on the Cotentin Peninsula, west of the mouths of the Douve and Vire rivers. Amphibious landings at Utah were undertaken by US Army troops, with sea transport, mine sweeping, and a naval bombardment force provided by the US Navy and Coast Guard as well as elements from the British, Dutch and other Allied navies. The objective was to gain a beachhead on the Cotentin Peninsula, the location of important port facilities at Cherbourg. The amphibious assault, primarily by the US 4th Infantry Division and 70th Tank Battalion, was supported by airborne landings of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Division. The intention was to rapidly seal off the Cotentin Peninsula, prevent the Germans from reinforcing Cherbourg, and capture the port as quickly as possible. Utah, along with Sword on the eastern flank, was added to the invasion plan in December 1943. The Allies on Utah faced two battalions of the 919th Grenadier Regiment, part of the 709th Static Infantry Division. While improvements to fortifications had been undertaken under the leadership of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel beginning in October 1943, the troops assigned to defend the area were mostly poorly equipped non-German conscripts. ►







Utah Beach Museum

### 13. Utah Beach Museum

Utah Beach, 50480 Saint-Marie-du-Mont, Manche

Built on Utah Beach around one of the original German bunkers (WN5) the Utah Beach Museum - Musée du Débarquement Utah Beach - is located on the beach where the American forces landed. The museum's exhibitions include the German Defences, the Cotentin peninsula under occupation, allied strategy, June 6, 1944: D-Day at Utah Beach, from Utah Beach to Cherbourg and the Port at Utah Beach. Located in a custom-built aviation hangar the museum houses an original B26 bomber, one of few examples worldwide. Also to be seen are a GMC 6x6, DUKW 6x6, an LVT and a Higgins boat.



WWII Memorial museum

### 13. World War II Museum

18 Avenue de la Plage, 50310 Quinéville

Open in this guise since April 2017, this museum and its remnants of the Atlantic Wall offer an insight into the war. Situated at the end of the road by the beach is this 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> museum. Located in the building that previously housed the Memorial of Liberty, the museum covers the period from the German occupation until the Norman Liberation. Particularly interesting is the fortification integrated into the museum, that was part of the Atlantic Wall and housed a 50mm gun.

## Omaha Beach

### 14. The Big Red One Assault Museum

D-514, 14710 Hameau Le Bray

The museum, located in Colleville-sur-Mer near the entrance to the American Cemetery, is largely dedicated to the 1st US Infantry Division,



Big Red One Assault Museum



Overlord Museum Omaha Beach

### 15. Overlord Museum Omaha Beach

Lotissement Omaha Centre, 14710 Colleville sur Mer

The Overlord Museum opened in June 2013 and is dedicated to June 6, 1944 and the Battle of Normandy. It is located in the heart of the D-Day Landing beaches, opposite the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, and displays the Leloup family's exceptional collection of more than 10,000 items including 35 tanks, guns and artillery pieces.

[www.overlordmuseum.com](http://www.overlordmuseum.com)



Memorial Museum Omaha Beach

### 16. Memorial Museum Omaha Beach

Avenue de la Libération, 14710 Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer

Located 200m from Omaha Beach (aka Bloody Omaha) and the nearby Omaha Memorial the 1200m<sup>2</sup> museum contains a large collection of uniforms, personal items, weapons and vehicles. Reconstructions of American and German scenes plunge you into the heart of D-Day history. Photos, documents, and an archive film accompanied by testimonials from American veterans clearly explains the D-Day landing on Omaha Beach and the Pointe du Hoc. [www.musee-memorial-omaha.com](http://www.musee-memorial-omaha.com)

### 17. Musee D-Day Omaha

Route de Grandcamp, 14710 Vierville-sur-Mer

Near Omaha Beach, this private museum features a collection of interesting items and material collected from the battlefields and individuals. It is crammed with artefacts and vehicles including a Kettenkrad and a Dodge WC. Outside are tank parts and other artefacts so although this maybe an old fashioned museum it is well worth a visit

### 18. Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial

14710 Colleville-sur-Mer,

On June 8, 1944, the US First Army established a temporary cemetery, the first American cemetery on European soil in World War Two. After the war, the permanent cemetery was established a short distance to

the east of the original site. This cemetery is managed by the American Battle Monuments Commission, a small independent agency of the US Federal government. The cemetery is located on a bluff overlooking Omaha Beach (one of the landing beaches of the Normandy Invasion) and the English Channel. It covers 172 acres, and contains the remains of 9,387 American military dead, most of who were killed during the invasion of Normandy and ensuing military operations of World War Two. Included are graves of Army Air Corps crews shot down over France as early as 1942 and three American women. Only some of the soldiers who died overseas are buried in the overseas American military cemeteries. When it came time for a permanent burial, the next of kin eligible to make decisions were asked if they wanted their loved ones repatriated for permanent burial in the US, or interred at the closest overseas cemetery.



Pointe du Hoc

### 19. Pointe du Hoc

Pointe du Hoc, Calvados, 14450 Criqueville-en-Bessin

The US Pointe du Hoc Ranger Monument is located is a promontory with a 100ft cliff overlooking the English Channel on the north-western coast of Normandy. It was the highest point between Utah Beach to the west and Omaha Beach to the east. The German army had fortified the area with concrete casemates and gun pits. The memorial was erected by the French to honour elements of the American Second Ranger Battalion who scaled the cliffs to capture the German artillery pieces that could have



Musee D-Day Omaha



fired on the American landing troops at Omaha and Utah beaches. The monument consists of a simple granite pylon positioned atop a German concrete bunker with tablets at its base inscribed in French and English. The monument was formally transferred to ABMC for perpetual care and maintenance on January 11, 1979. This battle-scarred area on the left flank of Omaha Beach remains much as the Rangers left it.

## Gold Beach

### 20. Arromanches-les-Bains

On the D514 coast road

Arromanches-les-Bains is located northeast of Bayeux and west of Courseulles-sur-Mer



Arromanches-les-Bains

on the coast in the heart of the area where the Normandy landings took place on D-Day. Today, Arromanches is largely a tourist town situated in a convenient location for visiting all of the battle sites and war cemeteries. There is also a museum at Arromanches with information about Operation Overlord and in particular, the Mulberry harbours. On the heights east of town, beside an unmissable statue of the Virgin Mary, a memorial honours the sappers of the Royal Engineers. Down in town, a memorial from 2009 pays homage to the London engineer, Allan Beckett, whose design for the floating roadway was of huge significance in the success of the artificial port.



A Bayeux street

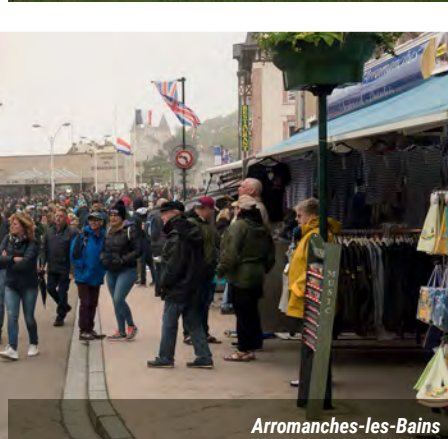
### 21. Bayeux

On the Rn13

Bayeux, on the River Aure, is a commune in the Calvados department in Normandy in north-western France. It is the home of the Bayeux Tapestry, which depicts the events leading up to the Norman conquest of England in 1066. During World War Two, Bayeux - just four miles from the coast of the English Channel - was the first city of the Battle of Normandy to be liberated. On June 16, 1944 General Charles de Gaulle delivered the first of two major speeches in Bayeux in which he made clear that France



US Cemetery, Omaha



Arromanches-les-Bains

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. The area around Bayeux is called the Bessin, which was the bailiwick of the province Normandy until the French Revolution. [www.bayeux.fr](http://www.bayeux.fr)

### 22. Bayeux British War Cemetery

1945 Boulevard Fabian Ware, 14400 Bayeux

The Bayeux British war cemetery is the largest World War Two cemetery of Common-



Bayeux British War Cemetery

wealth soldiers in France. It contains 4,648 burials and opposite it stands the Bayeux Memorial which commemorates more than 1,800 casualties of the Commonwealth forces who died in Normandy and have no known grave. The cemetery grounds were assigned to the United Kingdom in perpetuity by France in recognition of the sacrifices made by the British Empire in the defence and liberation of France during the war. In addition to the Commonwealth burials, there are 466 graves of German soldiers. The cemetery contains the Cross of Sacrifice or War Cross, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

Queen Elizabeth II and President of France

Jacques Chirac attended ceremonies at the cemetery on June 6, 2004, marking the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. The Queen and French president François Hollande attended ceremonies at the cemetery on June 6, 2014, marking the 70th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

### 23. D-Day Museum - Musée du Débarquement

Place du 6 Juin, 14117 Arromanches

On the initiative of Raymond Triboulet, France's first sub-prefect after the Liberation, this permanent exhibition on the Normandy Landings was officially opened on June 5, 1954 in Arromanches by Monsieur René Coty, then President of the French Republic. It was the first museum to be built in commemoration of June 6, 1944 and the Normandy Campaign. The D-day Museum overlooks the very spot where one of the Mulberry Harbours was constructed and where its remains can still be seen today, just a few hundred metres from the shore. The museum focuses on the D-Day landings and the crucial months of allied action afterwards. It goes into fascinating detail about the setting up of the Mulberry Harbour here through models, displays and videos.

### 24. Longues-sur-Mer Battery (Batterie Allemande)

Rue de la Batterie, 14400 Longues-Sur-Mer, Calvados

This was part of Hitler's Atlantic Wall defences consisting of four 152mm navy guns housed in large concrete casemates. The site of the battery also included a fire control post, ammunition stores, defensive machine gun posts and accommodation for the soldiers. The battery is located between Omaha and Gold beaches which made it a threat to the allied shipping during the landings. On the morning of June 7, the Allies effected an air raid that preceded the assault of the British troops of C Company of the 2nd Devonshire Regiment - a constituent of the 231st Brigade from Gold Beach, who captured the battery before noon and captured 120 German artillerymen and infantrymen.

The site of the battery is open to the public all year round including access inside the concrete casemates still housing their original guns and inside the fire control bunker which was featured in the 1962 film, The Longest Day.





Longues-sur-Mer Battery



Mulberry Harbour

## 25. Mulberry Harbour

Plage d'Arromanches, 14117 Arromanches-les-Bains

Arromanches is noted as being an important place during the Normandy landings, in particular as the site where the Mulberry harbour artificial port was constructed. The artificial port allowed the disembarkation of 9,000 tons of material per day and was commissioned on 14 June 1944. The location was one of two sites chosen to establish port facilities to unload quantities of supplies and troops needed for the invasion during June 1944. The British-built, floating concrete caissons, after being towed from England, were assembled to form walls and piers creating and defining the artificial harbour known as Port Winston. These comprised pontoons linked to the land by floating roadways. Several sections of the Mulberry harbour remain here lying mute on the sand and others further out to sea.

## 26. Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy

Boulevard Fabian Ware, 14400 Bayeux

The Musée Memorial Bataille de Normandie was founded in the 1970s and can be considered as a gateway to the D-Day beaches. Within the museum's 2,300 m<sup>2</sup> are exhibits that cover the Battle of Normandy, from the preparations for D-Day to August 29, 1944. This includes the advances



Bayeux Museum

of allied troops over the two-month period as well as military equipment and vehicles including a GMC, M3 Half-track, Caterpillar D7 bulldozer, Willys Jeep, weapons and uniforms. Outside are Sherman, Churchill and Hetzer tanks.

## 27. Port-en-Bessin

On the D514

Port-en-Bessin-Huppain, a small fishing harbour west of Arromanches, is a commune in the Calvados department of Normandy. During the invasion of Normandy, the Battle of Port-en-Bessin, also known as Operation Aubery, took place from 7–8 June 1944. The village was between Omaha Beach to the west and Gold Beach to the east in the British XXX Corps sector. An objective during Operation Overlord, the fortified port was captured by No. 47 (Royal Marine) Commando of the 4th Special Service Brigade. British petrol and oil storage depots were also to be established near the port and for American







Port-en-Bessin

forces at St. Honorine two miles west, under the code-name Tombola, to be filled from tankers offshore, using buoyed pipelines. The first pipeline into Port-en-Bessin opened on 25 June.

## Juno Beach

### 28. Bernières-sur-Mer

#### On the D514

Bernières-sur-Mer, in the arrondissement of Caen, is a commune in the Calvados department of la Basse-Normandie. It is one of the oldest towns of the Côte de Nacre. Gallo-Roman traces are scattered on the territory of the municipality. The town was liberated by The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada on June 6, 1944 as part of the leading assault wave of Operation Overlord. The remains of the Atlantic Wall are still visible and are a place of remembrance where each year the memory of the Canadians is honoured.

### 29. Churchill Mk IV AVRE tank memorial

#### Voie des Français Libres, 14470 Courseulles-sur-Mer

This Churchill Mk IV AVRE (Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers) tank is easy to miss as it is



Bernières-sur-Mer

not on the D514 coast road but on a side road that leads to the beach. This piece of history guards the major exit off Juno Beach. The dedication reads: "This tank landed on Graye-sur-Mer beach at H Hour on D-Day and was stopped on its way inland 100 metres south of this spot. The members of its crew were killed or badly wounded. It remains as a memorial to all who gave their lives here."

A memorial to the 16,000 men of the 1st Armoured Polish Division who landed here with their 400 tanks at the end of July 1944 is nearby.

### 30. Juno Beach Canadian Memorial

#### 40 Place du 6 Juin, 14990 Bernières-sur-Mer

This Duplex Drive Sherman in the centre



Juno Beach Canadian Memorial



Churchill Mk IV AVRE tank memorial

of town adorned with Canadian regimental plaques is one of numerous Canadian memorials here because Bernières-sur-Mer, was one of the five Canadian landing sites. It was located to the eastern end of Canada's assigned landing sector of Juno Beach. On D-Day, the 8th Canadian Infantry (Assault) Brigade Group, stormed the beach, landing The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, the 10th Armoured Regiment (The Fort Garry Horse), and the guns of the 14th Canadian Field Regiment, RCA, to engage the German troops who occupied the town. Canadian casualties were heavy because of heavy resistance from the German 716th Division.

### 31. Juno Beach Centre, Courseulles-sur-Mer

#### Voie des Français Libres, 14470 Courseulles-sur-Mer

The Juno Beach Centre is Canada's World War Two museum located in France. The Centre pays homage to the 45,000 Cana-



Gold Beach...





*Juno Beach Centre, Courseulles-sur-Mer*



dians who lost their lives during the war, of whom 5,500 were killed during the Battle of Normandy and 359 on D-Day. It was opened in 2003 by veterans and volunteers with a vision of creating a permanent memorial to all Canadians who served during World War Two. [www.junobeach.org](http://www.junobeach.org)

### 32. Monument General de Gaulle

*Promenade de Dartmouth, Courseulles-sur-Mer*

On June 14, 1944, General de Gaulle, leader of the French government in exile, came ashore here.

## Sword Beach



*A27L Cruiser MK VIII Centaur IV CS (Close Support) tank*

### 33. A27L Cruiser MK VIII Centaur IV CS (Close Support) tank

*Avenue Madame Coty, Hermanville-sur-Mer*

This tank was originally a Cromwell Dozer, with a bulldozer blade, and was restored at Duxford by the Imperial War Museum with a Cavalier turret recovered from the Otterburn ranges. Some of the fittings of Cromwell Dozer tanks can still be seen on the hull. It is marked and restored to appear as a Centaur close support tank of the Royal Marines Armoured Support Group.

The seaside resort of Hermanville-sur-Mer was part of the British sector of Sword Beach. Special tanks were landed to clear minefields and concrete obstructions to help the attacking infantry. The 1st Battalion of the South Lancashire Regiment and men of the 2nd and 5th Battalions of the East Yorkshire Regiment liberated Hermanville-sur-Mer while the Suffolk Regiment liberated the nearby town of Colleville.

### 34. Café Gondrée

*12 Avenue du Commandant Kieffer, 14970 Bénouville*

Built in 1892, the Café Gondrée is a small coffeehouse in the French community of Bénouville, located on the west bank of the Caen Canal, at the northwest end of the Bénouville Bridge, now known as Pegasus Bridge. The building was the site of first combat during the D-Day invasion, and is remembered for its



*Café Gondrée*

role commemorating those events. British 6th Airborne Division Horsa gliders landed 100 yards from the bridge near the Café Gondrée as Bénouville Bridge was a key objective of the British on D-Day. A unit of Glider infantry of the division's 2nd Battalion was to land, take the bridge intact and hold it until relieved. The unit was led by Major John Howard their gliders were released at 8,000ft on a dark and stormy night. All three gliders managed to make a rough landing in a field almost directly on top of their objective and the Paras engaged in a short, fierce firefight which ended with the British in control of the bridge and three British paratroopers entered the café at 06.20. The café was then run by Georges and Thérèse Gondrée who had been involved in the French Resistance, and had passed on information about the defences around the bridge to British intelligence. Taking the bridge limited the ability of the Germans to counter-attack following the Normandy invasion. Arlette Gondrée, a girl of 5 at the time of their liberation, currently runs Café Gondrée. The walls of the café are decorated with shoulder patch badges, regimental insignia, uniforms connected with the Parachute Regiment.

### 35. Churchill AVRE Mk IV tank memorial

*D514 roundabout, Lion-sur-Mer, Normandy*

This Churchill variant, the Mk IV AVRE (Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers), has a Petard 290mm Spigot Mortar designed to blow up concrete and this type were landed on nearby Sword Beach to get close to machine gun nests in concrete fortifications or fortified houses and destroy them. This tank stands next to the memorial for 41 Royal Marine Commando, part of the 4th Special Service Brigade that landed in Normandy on June



*Churchill AVRE Mk IV tank memorial*

6, 1944, and then took part in the capture of Douvres Radar Station on June 17.

### 36. Memorial Pegasus

*Avenue du Major Howard, 14860 Ranville*

Inaugurated on June 4, 2000 by HRH the Prince of Wales, the Memorial Pegasus is dedicated to the men of 6th Airborne Division and their role during the Battle of Normandy from June to September 1944. The museum was designed and constructed by the D-Day Commemoration Committee presided by Admiral Brac de la Perrière.

Guided visits, within a thematically laid out exhibition hall, enable the visitors to discover the missions of the division: missions carried out before the seaborne landings on the beaches in June 1944, The Longest Day. Historical objects and photos of the era are presented in the museum. The original Bénouville Bridge, renamed



*Pegasus Bridge Museum*

Pegasus Bridge after the liberation, is on display in the park of the museum along with a Bailey bridge and a full-size copy of a wartime Horsa glider. The collection is constantly increasing in size, the historical relevancy to 6th Airborne Division is carefully controlled by the British Airborne Assault Normandy Trust.

### 37. Pegasus Bridge

*Pont de Ranville, 14860 Ranville*

The capture of the River Orne bridge at Ranville and the bridge across the Caen Canal at Bénouville is the most famous mission of the airborne division. Around 180 troops of the Ox and Bucks Light Infantry, commanded by Major John Howard, captured the bridges after landing in Horsa gliders only yards from their objectives. In less than ten minutes both bridges had been captured intact. The seaborne reinforcements commanded by Brigadier Lord Lovat, preceded by his piper Bill Millin, were able to cross the waterways to reinforce 6th Airborne Division on the eastern flank. Among these Green Berets were 177 French Commandos commanded by Philip Kieffer.

On June 26, 1944, the Caen Canal bridge was baptised Pegasus Bridge as a tribute to the British airborne troops. In 1961 the bridge appeared in the D-Day film, The Longest Day. A new, wider, bridge was built in 1994 and the original Pegasus Bridge is now on display in the park of the museum.





Pegasus Bridge



The Editor paying his respects at Tilly-sur-Seulles Commonwealth War Cemetery

## Inland

### 38. Jerusalem War Cemetery

*D6 Chouain, 9km south-east of Bayeux*

Jerusalem British war cemetery, located between Bayeux and Tilly-sur-Seulles, is the smallest British World War Two cemetery of Commonwealth soldiers in Normandy. Jerusalem is a tiny hamlet near the village of Chouain. The area was the scene of bitter fighting when a German armoured column sought to retake Bayeux shortly after its liberation. The cemetery was begun on June 10 and is one of the smallest Commonwealth war cemeteries.



Jerusalem Cemetery

Jerusalem War Cemetery contains 47 burials, one of them unidentified, and one Czech grave. It was established in June 1944, and at the time nearby farm buildings were used by the RAMC as an advanced dressing station. As the fighting moved further south, the cemetery was no longer used. Two army chaplains are buried at Jerusalem, both killed in July 1944. It is also the final resting place of Private J Banks of the 8th Bn Durham Light Infantry. When he was killed on July 21, 1944 he was just 16 years old. [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

### 39. Orglandes German War Cemetery Near Orglandes, Manche

Orglandes War Cemetery is a German World War Two cemetery and is located on the northern edge of the village of Orglandes. The 10,152 interred died during the summer of 1944,



Orglandes German War Cemetery



St Manvieu British War Cemetery



immediately following D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. The entrance is marked by a small house surmounted by a bell-tower. The cemetery consists of 28 rows of graves, each grave marked by a stone cross. Each cross details the name, date of birth and date of death of each of the six or more dead soldiers buried to each cross. The cemetery is administered by the German War Graves Commission, the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge. The landscaping was completed in 1958 and the cemetery was inaugurated on September 20, 1961.

### 40. St Manvieu British War Cemetery Route de Saint Manvieu, 14980 Rots (on the D9 to the west of Caen)

Those interred in the Saint Manvieu War Cemetery died for the most part in the fluctuating battles from mid June to the end of July 1944 in the region between Tilly-sur-Seulles and Caen and Operations Epsom and Jupiter. The cemetery also contains graves of some of those killed in the battle for Hill 112. The cemetery contains 1,627 Commonwealth burials of World War Two, 49 of them unidentified. There are also 555 German burials. The cemetery was designed by Philip Hepworth. The entrance is

reached via a short grass pathway on a slight incline. There is a paved lay-by for parking. [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

### 41. Tilly-sur-Seulles Commonwealth War Cemetery

*Rue de Balleroy, Tilly-sur-Seulles. 1km west on D13*

There was heavy and fluctuating fighting in the vicinity of Tilly-sur-Seulles immediately after the landings involving both the British 49th (West Riding) Infantry and the 50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Divisions. Tilly itself was not captured until June 18 and fighting continued in the vicinity until mid-July. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery contains 990 Commonwealth burials of World War Two and 232 German graves. [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

### Getting There

A convenient way to travel to Normandy from the UK is to use the Portsmouth to Caen ferry as CMV did this year. It is a cost-effective and simple way to get close to the area of the Normandy landing beaches. [www.brittany-ferries.co.uk](http://www.brittany-ferries.co.uk)

