



Operation Overlord



Ranville Cemetery

D-DAY AT JUNO BEACH

May 31, 2022 – 14 Days

A World War II History Tour on the 78th Anniversary of D-Day

D-Day was the landing and associated airborne operations on Tuesday, June 6, 1944 of the Allied invasion of Normandy. Codenamed Operation Overlord, it was the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation began the liberation of France (and later western Europe) and laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front. Canadians played a vital role in these events, and are remembered at many memorials and museums. This tour will participate in the 78th Anniversary commemoration of D-Day at Juno Beach. The tour is organized by a British company that specializes in war history, and our guide, Steve Roberts, is an expert in Canadian war history. He accompanied our 2018 tour to Vimy for the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War I. Museums, memorials, cemeteries, and historic sites connected with D-Day are all included as we travel from Juno Beach to Dieppe and into Belgium, Netherlands, and Germany during this in-depth exploration of one of the most vital battles of World War II.

Activity Level: 2



TOUR
25

28 Meals Included:

11 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 10 dinners

Fares per person:

\$8,945 double/twin; \$9,900 single

Please add 0.1% GST.

Early Bookers:

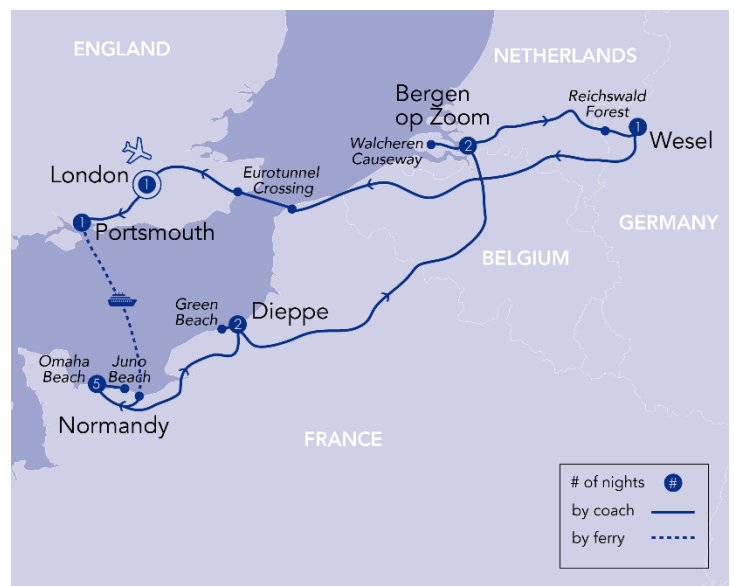
\$250 discount on first 8 seats; \$125 on next 4

Experience Points:

Earn 177 points on this tour.

Redeem 177 points if you book by February 23, 2022.

Departure from: Lower Mainland



ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday, May 31

We fly from YVR to Calgary on WestJet and meet the other Wells Gray travellers. We connect to an evening flight to London, also on WestJet.

Day 2: Wednesday, June 1

We arrive at London's Gatwick Airport in late morning and local time is 8 hours ahead of Pacific Time. Our driver and guide meet us at the airport and we head to Portsmouth on the south coast of England. We visit the **D-Day Museum** which tells the story of Operation Overlord, the codename for the Normandy landings on June 6, 1944. The **Overlord Embroidery** is displayed here which took 20 members of the Royal School of Needlework seven years to complete and measures 83 metres long. We stay overnight at the Royal Beach Hotel, a delightful historic building that has stood on the seafront since 1866. A get-acquainted dinner is followed by a presentation by Steve Roberts, our expert guide and historian.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Royal Beach Hotel

Day 3: Thursday, June 2

There are only two ferries a day across the English Channel from Portsmouth to France, so we take the early ferry that leaves at 8 am. It is a six-hour crossing to Ouistreham, France, on a ferry that carries 2,200 people and boasts two movie theatres and several restaurants. Welcome to France! We visit the **Pegasus Bridge Museum**, one of military history's finest examples of success based on simplicity and surprise. The two bridges were captured in 15 minutes by airborne troops of the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry, landing by glider. **Memorial Pegasus** was inaugurated in 2000 by the Prince of Wales and is dedicated to the men of 6th Airborne Division and their role during the Battle of Normandy from June to September 1944. **Café Gondrée** is beside the Pegasus Bridge and was the first house liberated on mainland France on D-Day. Afterwards, we drive an hour to Omaha Beach and settle into the Mercure Hotel for a five-night stay.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Mercure Hotel Omaha Beach

Day 4: Friday, June 3

We visit some of the nearby Canadian D-Day memorials. The **1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Memorial** at Varville Crossroads is situated opposite the unit's landing grounds and this introduces the first Canadians to land here. Some of the first Canadian casualties are interred at Ranville Commonwealth War Cemetery.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Mercure Hotel Omaha Beach

Day 5: Saturday, June 4

Today, we visit the **Battle of Normandy Museum** in Bayeux which explains the decisive actions that led to the liberation of Western Europe. We continue to Juno, looking at the Queen's Own Rifles House on the beach of Bernières-sur-Mer, as well as the tank called **Charlie 1**. Next is the **Juno Beach Centre**, dedicated to Canada's involvement in World War II. This afternoon, we head inland to look at the Canadian efforts after the D-Day landings including the Canadian Military Cemetery at Beny sur Mer, Authie and the Ardenne Abbaye. Later, we stop at **Verrieres Ridge** where the "Black Watch" suffered severe casualties during Operation Spring and the Hill 67 Memorial (Operation Totalize).

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Mercure Hotel Omaha Beach

Day 6: Sunday, June 5

We start the day at the German cemetery at La Cambe to give contrast and to discuss who killed tank commander, Michael Wittmann – the British or Canadians. We continue our focus on the Normandy Invasion with a visit to **Pointe du Hoc**, where the cratered landscape caused by the German battery can be observed. Then we see **Omaha Beach** and the American Military Cemetery to discover the challenges of landing on the beach. This is followed by a visit to La Chaos - the German offshore battery in Longues-sur-Mer which is still relatively intact. Later, we visit the **Disembarkation Museum** and Mulberry Harbour in Arromanches before returning to our hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Mercure Hotel Omaha Beach

Day 7: Monday, June 6

We attend the **D-Day Commemoration** ceremony at Juno Beach, 78 years after one of the most significant battles of World War II.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Mercure Hotel Omaha Beach

Day 8: Tuesday, June 7

Leaving Omaha Beach, we travel east over the Pont de Normandie near Le Havre which crosses the Seine River on a 2-km span. In the resort town of **Dieppe**, we visit the Canadian Cemetery and Green Beach at Pourville to view the Red and White landing beaches on the Dieppe seafront, as well as the **Canadian Memorial Museum**. Later at the Blue Beach in Puys, we view the gun emplacements on the cliff tops which were responsible for the terrible Canadian casualties.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Dieppe la Présidence Hotel

Day 9: Wednesday, June 8

This is a free day to do as you wish in Dieppe.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Dieppe la Présidence Hotel

Day 10: Thursday, June 9

Today, our focus is on **Operation Switchback**, also known as the Battle of Breskens Pocket which lasted for four weeks in October 1944. Our historian-guide relates stories about crossing the Leopold Canal by the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade and the Algonquin Regiment, the Groede Bunker Complex, and the German evacuation across the Scheldt.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Bergen-op-Zoom

Day 11: Friday, June 10

We learn about **Operation Vitality** which secured South Beveland in late October 1944 and Operation Infatuate, the assault on Walcheren in early November. Some of the featured talks are: Woensdrecht – Defence by 6th Fallschirmjager Regiment, losses by The Canadian Black Watch and The Calgary Highlanders.

Walcheren Causeway – assault by 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade and 157th Infantry Brigade.

Vlissingen – assault by 4th Commando and 155th Infantry Brigade.

Serooskerke – Mobile V2 launch site

Bergen-Op-Zoom – Canadian Cemetery

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Bergen-op-Zoom

Day 12: Saturday, June 11

Operation Veritable (also known as the Battle of the Reichswald) was the northern part of an Allied pincer movement that took place between February 8 and March 11, 1945 during the final stages of World War II. The operation was conducted by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's Anglo-Canadian 21st Army Group. The **Overloon National War and Resistance Museum** has many exhibits about this battle and the war in general. We also visit the Reichswald Forest Cemetery which contains the graves of Canadian aircrews and Dambuster crews, and learn about the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Division operations towards Moyland Wood in April 1945.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Kaiserhof, Wesel

Day 13: Sunday, June 12

This morning is the final event of our D-Day history tour – an **Act of Remembrance ceremony** at Groesbeek Canadian Cemetery. This afternoon, we travel across The Netherlands and Belgium to Calais, France. We drive onto the **Eurotunnel train** for the 50-km, 35-minute crossing of the English Channel to England. The tunnel was completed in 1994 at a cost of £9 billion and is the third longest railway tunnel in the world, reaching a depth of 115 metres below sea level. We stay overnight near Gatwick Airport.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: TBA

Day 14: Monday, June 13

Our WestJet flight leaves Gatwick in early afternoon, non-stop to Calgary, then we continue to Vancouver.

Meals included: Breakfast

STEVE ROBERTS, HISTORIAN - GUIDE


Our Historian-Guide for this tour of D-Day sites has some impressive credentials. Steve Roberts is a Military Historian and Battlefield Guide who specializes in World War I and II. Steve is a retired soldier and policeman. He has a Master's Degree in British First World War Studies and is a published author on the period. He is actively involved in Battlefield Archaeology on the Western Front and has appeared in several television programs on this subject, such as *Finding the Fallen*, *Trench Detectives*, and *Vimy the 3D Battle*. *The Battle of the Somme, The True Story* is an in-depth study of the film *The Battle of the Somme*, produced in 1916. Steve has been leading tours to the battlefields for 30 years, regularly guiding adult, military, and school groups. He also specializes in providing bespoke tours based around relatives who served, personalizing these tours in a unique way. Steve has guided many Canadian groups and is very knowledgeable about the battlefields and memorials that are significant for Canadians.

D-DAY

Planning for Operation Overlord began in 1943. In the months leading up to the invasion, the Allies conducted a substantial military deception, codenamed Operation Bodyguard, to mislead the Germans as to the date and location of the main Allied landings. The weather on D-Day was far from ideal, and the invasion had to be delayed 24 hours; a further postponement would have meant a delay of at least two weeks, as the planners depended on the phase of the moon, the tides, and the time of day which meant that only a few days each month were suitable. Adolf Hitler placed Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in command of German forces and of developing fortifications along the Atlantic Wall in anticipation of an Allied invasion. U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt placed Major General Dwight Eisenhower in command of Allied forces.

June 6, 1944 started with an extensive aerial and naval bombardment and an airborne assault, followed by the amphibious landing of 24,000 Canadian, British, and American airborne troops. Allied infantry and armoured divisions began landing on the coast of France at 06:30. The target 80 km stretch of the Normandy coast was divided into five sectors: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Strong winds blew the landing craft east of their intended positions, particularly at Utah and Omaha. The men landed under heavy fire from gun emplacements overlooking the beaches, and the shore was mined and covered with obstacles such as wooden stakes, metal tripods, and barbed wire, making the work of the beach-clearing teams difficult and dangerous.

D-Day set the stage for Operations Switchback, Vitality, and Veritable during the next 10 months, and laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front.

 **Activity Level 2:** Due to the historic nature of some memorials and attractions, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk up to one kilometre at a time. Rooms in some hotels may be reached by some stairs after riding the elevator. Sometimes the coach cannot drive all the way to a historic site. Expect extended walks with talking stops through the war cemeteries. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. There can be longer walks in the airports while travelling to/from London; request a cart or wheelchair in advance or at check-in if needed. Please consider these mobility issues prior to booking this tour. The coach cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, historian-guide, and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- WestJet flights from Vancouver to London
- Current air taxes, security fees and surcharges
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase
- 12 nights accommodation and hotel taxes
- Coach transportation in Europe for 12 days
- Expert historian-guide for 12 days of touring
- D-Day Museum in Portsmouth
- Overlord Embroidery
- Ferry from Portsmouth to Ouistreham, France
- Pegasus Bridge Museum
- Memorial Pegasus
- 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Memorial
- Ranville Commonwealth War Cemetery
- Battle of Normandy Museum
- Juno Beach Centre
- Verrieres Ridge
- Pointe du Hoc
- American Military Cemetery
- Disembarkation Museum
- D-Day Ceremony at Juno Beach
- Dieppe Canadian Cemetery
- Red and White landing beaches
- Canadian Memorial Museum at Dieppe
- Battle of Breskens Pocket sites
- Operation Vitality sites
- Bergen-Op-Zoom Canadian Cemetery
- Overloon National War & Resistance Museum
- Reichswald Forest Cemetery
- Act of Remembrance ceremony at Groesbeek
- Eurotunnel train from Calais to Folkestone
- Transfer from hotel to Gatwick Airport
- WestJet flights from London to Vancouver
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Gratuities to guide and driver
- Luggage handling at most hotels
- **28 meals:** 11 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 10 dinners

TOUR NOTES

Why are we flying to London? Since most of this tour is visiting memorial sites in France, Belgium, and Netherlands, you might ask why we are not flying to a European airport. Brexit is the answer. Our historian-guide, Steve Roberts, is an expert on Canadian World War sites and conducted our 2018 historical tour focused on Vimy, but we cannot pick him up in Europe now that Britain has left the European Union. The tour must start in England, then we can use a British guide in Europe.

Currency & Expenses: The Euro is used during most of this tour and, as of August 2021, a Canadian dollar is worth about €0.67. The British Pound is used in England and a Canadian dollar is worth about £0.58. You should order Euros and Pounds from your bank 1-2 weeks before departure, or plan to use ATMs. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. Gratuities are included for all group meals, the historian-guide, and driver.

Fare Changes: As this tour has been planned and priced 9 months before departure, exchange fluctuations between the Canadian dollar and the Euro or Pound could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease. Changes to taxes and surcharges from the airline or other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore, Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes until departure.

Flight: The round-trip flight is on WestJet from Vancouver via Calgary to London Gatwick.

Documentation: A valid passport is required. A visa is not required.

Rooms for singles are often a different style or smaller size than twin rooms. Many hotels limit the number of single rooms allocated to a group. Please book early if you prefer to travel single.

Triples are not available on this tour.

Beverages: Although most meals are included, it is not common practice to include beverages with meals. Bottled water is served, but any other beverage will probably be at your expense.

TOUR 25 This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$1,200 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due February 23, 2022. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$250 discount on first 8 seats and \$125 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after February 23, 2022.

Cancellation Policy: Up to December 16, 2021, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From December 17, 2021 to February 23, 2022, the cancellation charge is \$350 per person. From February 24 to March 23, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From March 24 to April 23, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After April 23, there is no refund.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Photo Credits: Wikimedia (D-Day landing, Canada House), Commonwealth War Graves Commission (Ranville)

Experience Points: This tour earns 177 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until February 23, 2022.

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