

# NORMANDY D-DAY 80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY TOUR

JUNE 2-13, 2024

TOUR LEADER JOHN HETHERINGTON



## ***Sunday June 02:***

Overnight flight from Toronto to Paris on Air Transat. **TS 188** departing Toronto Pearson Airport, Terminal 3 is scheduled to depart at **21:10** hrs.

## ***Monday June 03:***

Arrival at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport is scheduled at **10:35** hrs.

After clearing customs and collecting luggage we board our coach and travel to Courseulles-sur-Mer, Normandy. Arrival late afternoon and check into hotel located on Juno Beach.

**Hôtel La Cremaillere (5 nights)**

<https://www.la-cremaillere.com/fr/>

## ***Tuesday June 04: Airborne operations Eastern sector***

After breakfast at the hotel, we travel east to the village of Varaville to examine the landing operations of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion to capture the bridge over the Divette river. This was the first target attacked by the Canadians just after midnight on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944. A few kilometres to the west we visit the Merville coastal battery and learn about the actions by the British airborne during operation Tonga. We finish our day of airborne actions with a stop at Pegasus bridge and learn about one of the most successful and daring operations of the Normandy campaign.



### ***Wednesday June 05: The Canadian Landings and the Push Inland.***

This morning we walk the beach at St. Aubin at the eastern end of Juno Beach and the landing sites of the North Shore Regiment and Fort Gary Horse. We then examine the defences that confronted the Queens Own Rifles at the Bernieres-sur-Mer landing site. This Regiment suffered the highest casualties on D-Day. We then move inland to the Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery, the final resting place for 2028 Canadian soldiers killed during the first weeks of the Normandy campaign. Our route next heads south to trace the route of the Canadians in different actions as they headed for Caen. At Point 67, Verriers Ridge we learn why this was such an important high ground objective in the Normandy campaign. A few kilometers south we visit the 2nd Canadian War cemetery in Normandy at Bretteville-sur-Laize, the final resting place of 2793 Canadian soldiers killed during the second phase of the Battle of Normandy.



### ***Thursday June 06: 80<sup>th</sup> Normandy Anniversary Ceremonies***

Today we will attend the ceremonies that mark the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Normandy landings on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944. When the schedule has been finalized (by the Canadian and French Governments), we will provide a more detailed itinerary for the day. If time permits, we will spend some time at other selected sites. (TBA)



### ***Friday June 07: Normandy Western Sector***

Travelling west again we visit the Longue Battery. This is the largest remaining German coastal battery along the Atlantic wall. Four casemates each containing 150mm guns, were part of the impressive Atlantic Wall defences built by the Germans to repel a seaborne attack. On the way home we stop at Arromanche during low tide to view the remains of the Mulberry Harbour that was floated across from England and dropped into position on June 8<sup>th</sup>. This engineering marvel allowed for a portable port to be brought to the invasion beaches.





### ***Saturday June 08: Dieppe***

After breakfast we depart for Dieppe. Arrival by noon to begin our tour of the landing areas of the failed Anglo-Canadian raid on this French port. The raid was conducted by British commandoes and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division on August 19, 1942. The actions on this date were the largest single day loss for Canada during WW2. We will inspect the main landing beach and one of the flank landing areas before visiting the Canadian War Cemetery. Tonight, we will be staying in a hotel that backs onto the harbour and overlooks the main landing beach. There are dozens of great restaurants with indoor and outdoor seating to enjoy a harbourside dinner.

#### **Hotel de l'Europe**

<http://www.hotel-europe-dieppe.com/>



### ***Sunday June 09: Ypres Flanders***

We travel up the coast and make a stop at the Todt coastal battery that fired on England during 1943. From here you can see the white cliffs of Dover. Early afternoon arrival in Ypres with time to settle into the hotel and relax on your own in this beautiful medieval town.

#### **Novotel Ieper Centre (2nights)**

<https://all.accor.com/hotel/3172/index.en.shtml>



### ***Monday June 10: Ypres Salient***

Today we journey into the countryside of Flanders. This area was called the Ypres Salient, a bulge in the German lines that the allies held from 1914 to the end of the war. It was here that the Canadians were first blooded when they arrived at the front in April 1915. We visit the site where during 2 days of fighting and the first gas attacks, the Canadians sustained 6,000 casualties. Next, we travel across the rich farmland to Passchendaele where the Canadian Corps were victorious in capturing the high ground in October and November 1917. There are additional stops during the day, dependent on time and interest. This evening you have an opportunity to attend the Last Post ceremonies at the Menin Gate in Ypres. This moving event has been conducted each night at 8:00pm since 1928.





## ***Tuesday June 11: Vimy Ridge***

We travel south to spend most of the day in and around Vimy Ridge. We will discuss this critical battle for the Canadians and learn why it succeeded. We can tour the monument on Hill 145, visit the trenches and the underground subways that are open to the public. A stop will be made at the German WW1 cemetery which contains the remains of 45,000 soldiers. By mid afternoon we will leave for Amiens.

### **Hotel Ibis styles (2 nights)**

<https://all.accor.com/hotel/B5R0/index.en.shtml>



## ***Wednesday June 12: The Somme***

Our short drive today will bring us to the centre of the Somme battlefield. Here, the British launched their biggest offensive of the war on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1916, along a 40km front. 57,000 casualties were suffered by the British Army on the first day. The Canadians joined the fight in September 1916 and before the campaign ended in mid November, they would suffer 24,000 casualties. From there we visit La Boisselle mine crater, the Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Battlefield Park, Pozieres Tank Memorial and Courcelette. We then return to Amiens and our final night to include our farewell dinner.



### ***Thursday June 13: Departure***

Following an early breakfast, we depart our hotel in Amiens and drive to Paris Charles de Gaulle airport. Our flight is scheduled to depart at 12:20pm to arrive in Toronto at 2:45pm.

\*Dinners and lunches that are included will be added to the final itinerary early in the new year.

\* Breakfast at the hotel is included each day.

\*There will also be museum visits included when the sites are confirmed.