

Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours presents



THE ORIGINAL BAND OF BROTHERS TOUR

Walk in The Footsteps of The Men of Easy Company

2015

15-Day Tour: ~~May 15 - 31~~ / July 17 - 31 / September 4 - 18

13-Day Tour: ~~May 15 - 28~~ / July 18 - 31 / September 5 - 18

**MAY TOUR
SOLD OUT**

Day 1

Arrival in Atlanta

The tour begins in Atlanta with an informal Welcome Reception where participants will have an opportunity to get acquainted with each other and meet the historians and tour staff. A brief overview of the legacy of Easy Company will set the stage for the days ahead.

Day 2

Toccoa: Birthplace of the 506th

Ask any of the original members of Easy Company what made the unit so special and they will answer: "Toccoa." This training ground in the north Georgia woods was where the bonding process of the 506th began. As it did for so many of the men of Easy Company, our tour of Toccoa will begin at the train station where recruits for the 506th first arrived. The station also houses the Stephens County Historical Society, the 506th Museum and the unique collection of artifacts and memorabilia from Camp Toccoa. Following lunch, we travel to the site of the Camp and then proceed up Mount Currahee, the 1,000 foot mountain the men of the 506th ran daily for training. Here they drew their inspiration and motto "Currahee," an Indian word meaning "We Stand Alone."

Day 3 (*13-Day tour begins in London) England, Prelude to Invasion

After our arrival in London, we will visit Littlecote House, the historic English manor that was headquarters for the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment for the six months prior to the invasion. We will tour Aldbourne, the tiny Wiltshire village that was the home of Easy Company and visit many of the buildings used by the men of Easy as they prepared for the greatest invasion in history. When in the village we will have an opportunity to enjoy a traditional lunch in the same pubs frequented by the men of the Easy Company.



Immortalized by the Stephen Ambrose best-seller, "Band of Brothers," and brought to millions more in the epic Steven Spielberg/Tom Hanks HBO miniseries of the same name, the men of Easy Company were on an extraordinary journey during WWII. From D-Day to V-E Day, the paratroopers of Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment participated in some of the war's most critical battles and proved to truly be a company of heroes.

This unique tour follows the path of Easy Company from its training bases in Toccoa, Georgia, and England into combat in Normandy, Holland, Belgium, and on to final victory at Berchtesgaden, Adolf Hitler's Alpine retreat.

You'll stand in the very foxholes and precise locations where they fought in some of the most climatic battles of World War II. Based on the recollections of the paratroopers themselves and the extensive research of Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose and the editors of Military History Quarterly and World War II magazines, you'll have an experience unparalleled in its accuracy and insight.

Call toll free 1-888-903-3329 or visit www.stephenambrosetours.com

Day 4

Crossing the Channel

We begin our day in Portsmouth with a visit to the award winning D-Day Museum and Southwick House, the elegant country house which became the location of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. In the months leading up to D-Day, Southwick House became the headquarters of the main Allied commanders: Allied Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower; Naval Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Ramsay; and the Army Commander-in-Chief, General Montgomery. Large wall maps that were used in planning D-Day are still in place in the house, with markers showing the positions of the involved forces at the moments of the first landings. After our visit to Southwick House, we board the cross-channel ferry to France.

Day 5

Fortress Europe

At the start of the invasion several members of Easy Company landed in and around Ste-Mere-Eglise, including Richard Winters, Carwood Lipton and Bill Guarnere. Here we begin our historical tracings of the 506th in France. This is where Dick Winters took command after the tragic death of Lt. Thomas Meehan.

From Ste-Mere-Eglise we follow the route Lieutenant Winters and a handful of men took on the first night of the invasion of Brecourt Manor. In 1944, the Manor was the site of a German battery that threatened the invasion beaches at Utah.

From the Manor we proceed to Utah Beach and the Utah Beach Museum. From Ste. Marie-du-Mont, we will travel past Dead Man's Corner, and into Carentan, the Norman town that was one of the Allies earliest objectives. We will see the site of Easy's battle as they entered the town on June 12, and the square from which General Maxwell Taylor presented awards to his men for their gallant performance during the invasion.

Day 6

Normandy Coast

Rising early the next morning, we will drive to Omaha Beach where the Americans took the German fortifications after a stupendous fight. The six-mile wide invasion beach is surrounded by cliffs that made the landing and attack extremely difficult. Landings here were necessary in order to link with the British.

Very little went as planned during the landing at Omaha Beach. Many landing crafts missed their targets throughout the day. German defenses were strong, and inflicted heavy casualties on US troops. Losses were especially high in the first wave of landings; there were 2,400 casualties on Omaha Beach alone.

We will study the battlefield and hear accounts of the action, cross the beach, analyze the maps and imagine the courage that saved our freedom that day.

Today the American Cemetery stretches along the bluff overlooking Omaha Beach. It covers 172 acres, and contains the remains of American military dead, most of whom were killed during the invasion of Normandy and ensuing military operations in World War II. The names of the Americans who lost their lives in the conflict but could not be located and/or identified are inscribed on the walls of a semicircular garden to the east side of the memorial. We will spend some time at the cemetery to pay our respects.

In the afternoon we will visit the bridge over the Caen Canal, today called Pegasus Bridge after the symbol of the British airborne forces. Pegasus Bridge, captured by a gliderborne company of the 6th Division British Airborne Troops, was the first engagement of D-Day, and the turning point of World War II.



Day 7

Remember September

Today we will study Operation Market Garden, the largest airborne operation of the war. In broad daylight, the 101st Airborne Division parachuted into Holland in a bold strike in order to seize bridges across rivers and adjacent canals from Belgium to Arnhem. Then we will head to Son, location of the 506th's drop zone and the bridge over Wilhelmina.

Under the command of Col. Sink, the mission was to capture the bridge over the Wilhelmina Canal and then

advance south to Eindhoven. We will follow the company's route into Eindhoven and visit Saint Catherine's church where many of the original liberators gathered in September 1944. Our last stop of the day will be the Veghel battle site, where all of the 101st Airborne Division fought to keep Hell's Highway clear of enemy troops.

Day 8

In Holland, Where They Stand

Our travels continue along Hell's Highway, the route followed by the British XXX Corps as it attempted to reach its embattled 1st Airborne Division, in Arnhem. Our travels will also take us to the famous bridge over the Rhine that was the objective of Operation Market Garden, the Bridge of Nijmegen.

Following lunch at the De Westerbouwing restaurant, which in 1944 was a German observation position, we travel to the Island, a five-kilometer strip of land between the Neder Rijn and the Waal and the northernmost point of Allied territory. While at the Island, we will visit the E Company positions during the month-long stalemate at the end of Operation Market Garden.

After a stop at Tor Schoonderlogt, a farm which was the 2nd Battalion Headquarters, we will visit Easy Company's jump off point for Operation Pegasus, a mission to rescue trapped British paratroopers.

We will walk the site of the fight at the Crossroads, where E Company attacked and destroyed a company of elite SS soldiers, preventing over 300 German soldiers from joining an attack on the 506th regimental headquarters.

You will stand in the very spots where American and German forces stood, and will understand what Stephen Ambrose meant when he said that the best way to understand history is to study the places it was made.

Day 9 Bastogne

Our next stop is Bastogne, Belgium, the site of the division's epic eight-day stand against the Germans in December 1944. Along the way we stop at the American Battle Monuments Commission's Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial at Margraten to pay our respects at the graves of Easy Company men killed in Holland and Belgium. In Bastogne we visit the Battle of the Bulge Museum and General Anthony McAuliffe's headquarters during the siege

Day 10 The Bois Jacques and Beyond

The day starts with a visit to the Bois Jacques, Halt Station and Easy Company's foxholes overlooking the village of Foy. From Foy we will follow the company's route through Recogne, stopping to visit the German cemeteries, Cobru, Noville and Luzory. We conclude our day at the American Cemetery in Luxembourg, where General George S. Patton is buried with members of his 3rd Army.

Day 11 The Last Patrol

From Bastogne we head to Fort Simserhof, a beautifully preserved Maginot Line fortification, and a visit to the Musée de la Fortification du Simserhof. Our day concludes at Hagenau, the site of some of Easy Company's final battles and several daring patrols.

Day 12 Why We Fight

On April 29, 1945, as they advanced into the Bavarian Alps, Easy Company liberated a satellite of the Dachau concentration camp at Landsberg. We will visit Dachau, site of some of the most nefarious acts of and against humankind during the war, as we travel south through Bavaria. Constructed in a disused gunpowder factory, Dachau was the first concentration-style camp after which all subsequent concentration camps were modeled. In total, over 200,000 prisoners from more than 30 countries were housed in Dachau, with at least 30,000 registered prisoners believed to have died in the camp and its subcamps: notably Jews, resistance fighters, clergymen, politicians, communists, writers, artists and royalty. The second camp liberated by British or American forces, Dachau was one of the first places to fully expose the west to Nazi brutality.



Day 13 The Eagle's Nest

Our study of Easy Company battlefields ends at Adolf Hitler's Alpine retreat at Berchtesgaden where we will visit the Eagle's Nest and the remains of the vast Nazi Party complex liberated by Easy Company in May 1945. The Eagle's Nest was built as a 50th birthday present to Hitler from the Nazi party. Perched at 6,017 feet, the Eagle's Nest and the road network leading to it were considered feats of engineering as they were completed in only 13 months time in 1937-38.



Day 14 Points

As it did for the men of Easy Company, our travels will end at Zell am See and Kaprun, Austria, where they celebrated the anniversary of their jump into Normandy with a parachute drop into the waters of the Zeller See Lake. In the evening we will have a final special banquet, where we can reflect on our trip and the Band of Brothers' role in securing victory in Europe.

Day 15 Going Home

Depart our hotel in Berchtesgaden for Munich and our flight back home.

THE ORIGINAL BAND OF BROTHERS TOUR

15-Day Tour

**\$6,395 per person based on double occupancy.
\$1,100 single supplement**

13-Day Tour

**\$5,095 per person based on double occupancy.
\$995 single supplement**

\$500 deposit required for both tours

- Trans-Atlantic airfare to London, England and returning from Munich, Germany (15-day tour only)
- Full time historian and logistical support
- Accommodations in three- and four-hotels
- Touring by luxury private European Motorcoach
- Welcome reception in Atlanta, Georgia (USA)
- Breakfast daily, 12 dinners
- All entrance fees to museums and attractions
- Hotel taxes, portorage, and service charges