



NORMANDY 2017

73rd Anniversary of the Normandy Landings

An important commemoration

June this year, as in so many previous years, saw a large number of Normandy veterans travelling to France to take part in a wide range of commemorative events. There were numerous events across Normandy over the first week or so of June. The events captured in this newsletter are just a flavour of some of those that were held.

73 years on from the operation that liberated France, and ultimately Europe, from a sinister and oppressive regime, the events were as emotional and meaningful as always.

Sunday 4th June

Some of the major events started with the ceremony in front of the statue of Field Marshal Montgomery at Colleville Montgomery, which sits at Sword Beach.

It was well attended and was led by Rev Mandy Reynolds. The Dutch Band of Liberation provided the music and led veterans for a march past as they went to the sea front for a vin d'honneur, the salute being taken by the Mayor of Colleville Montgomery.

Monday 5th June

A further, more informal, Service was held at the statue of Montgomery on 5th June for those who

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Reunion Weekend

Friday 29th September to Sunday 1st October 2017

Now for something a little different, This year we are planning to hold the veterans reunion over a weekend in Portsmouth. Details are available on our web site. There will be a welcome buffet on the Friday evening, events in Portsmouth throughout the Saturday including a Gala Dinner in the evening at the Royal Maritime Club and the weekend will be brought to a close with a commemorative service at the Cenotaph in Southsea.

We do hope that you will be able to join us again this year. Mark Waring and his colleagues at Return to Normandy have put together plans for the weekend and arranged accommodation.

See you there!



Some of the veterans at the reunion last year

were unable to change travel arrangements to attend the service on 4th June.

The Mayor of Colleville Montgomery spoke at the Service and the event was led by Richard Palusinski, Chairman of the Spirit of Normandy Trust. Almost 30 veterans attended, music was provided by massed pipes led by the Jedburgh Pipe Band and military bugles played Last Post and Reveille. The Lesson was read by Lord Dannatt, the Exhortation was given by Hector Duff L d'Hon and the Kohima Epitaph by Allan Gullis L d'Hon. A number of Standards were paraded including some from Buenos Aires.

It was during this service that the Deputy Mayor announced that a young man from the village had been killed in the London Bridge terrorist attack. Very sad news, particularly in a small community like Colleville Montgomery.



Our Patron, Lord Dannatt, reads the Lesson at Colleville Montgomery

Following the Service at Colleville Montgomery on 5th June, Trevor Beattie took a Royal Naval Ensign on to the beach with a number of veterans and the Mayor. The Ensign is certified as the original beach flag that was used on D Day by the Beachmaster of Sword Beach. Trevor had managed to obtain the Ensign at auction and felt that it was particularly appropriate to have it present on the beach with a group of veterans.



Veterans and the local Mayor, M Loinard, on the beach at Colleville Montgomery with the original Beachmaster's Flag

Tuesday 6th June

As in past years, the main commemorative events were held in the Cathedral and Military Cemetery at Bayeux. Both Services were very well attended.

The day started with a 10.00 a.m. Service in Notre Dame Cathedral in Bayeux. Seats towards the front of the nave were reserved for veterans. The Service commenced with marching in the Standards. The Dutch Band of Liberation provided the music.

Following the Cathedral Service, veterans, families and friends gathered at the British Military Cemetery for a commemorative service at midday.

The Service was very well attended and was a poignant and moving ceremony.



Veteran Ray Lord L d'Hon giving the Exhortation at Bayeux Cemetery

During this Service at Bayeux Cemetery the Exhortation was given by Ray Lord L d'Hon and the veterans' prayer was read by Ken Hay JP, L d'Hon, both veterans of the Normandy Landings

Later that day veterans again gathered at Arromanches for a parade and Service, which was held on the sea front by the D Day Museum. Heavy showers fell before and during the Service but they did not dampen the enthusiasm of those who made the effort to attend. Rev Mandy Reynolds led the Service and the Mayor, M Patrick Jardin, and his deputy, M Adrian Cox, spoke warmly of the bravery and fortitude of the young men who landed on the beaches of France so many years ago. The Salute was taken by Lord Dannatt, who also spoke at the Service



Black Cabs from the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans arrive at Oustreham at dusk bringing veterans

Scenes from Normandy 2017



Richard Palusinski, Chairman of the Spirit of Normandy Trust shares a joke with Veteran Allan Gullis



Veteran Hector Duff MM L d'Hon in Bayeux



Travelling in style at Bayeux

A number of other commemorative events were held at locations including Pegasus Bridge, Rots, Pegasus Bridge and the Jerusalem Cemetery in Chouain, many of which were attended by Trustees from the Spirit of Normandy Trust.

A large number of organisations worked together to make the events this year a great success. These included the Royal British Legion, Return to Normandy, D Day revisited, the D Day academy the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, the Mairies of Colleville Montgomery and Arromanches and many others. A huge vote of thanks must go to them all.