

## **Errata and Addenda to Fields of War: Battle of Normandy**

Fortunately, the battlefields of Europe are generally preserved, frequently by local law, and change little with time. The same cannot be said of the man-made markers on those battlefields. New remembrances are created to bring recognition to some previously overlooked unit or individual. Old memorials are modified and museums are opened, redesigned, or even closed. Highly popular battlefield sites are thus in constant flux requiring updates to visitors guides.

Museums, in particular, have undergone dramatic changes. In order to attract younger visitors, they have revised exhibits to include the sights and sounds of battle through film clips, animation, phone apps, or even the flash, bang, and smoke of weapons. Critics deplore these additions as being Disneyesque, but, in a connected world, perhaps such devices are necessary to garner attention to the realities of the Second World War. Museums change their hours of operation, so to avoid disappointment, check open hours on their websites.

Changes have occurred in anticipation of the 2019 75th Anniversary of the D-Day landings. Significant alterations to the remembrance landscape are provided below.

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Unfortunately, the **Normandy Pass** program, which provided discounts at many of the area's museums and attractions, has been discontinued.

### **Page 15 Merville Battery**

The casemates present an increased level of audio-visual screens depicting actions of various units involved in the 6 June assault. The main administration bunker has a light, sound, and smoke show lasting about 7 minutes and running every 20 minutes that depicts the German gunners firing their cannon and the airborne attack upon the bunker with grenades and machine guns. An interesting film of an interview with Lieutenant-Colonel Terence Otway, probably from the 1970s, is shown every 20 minutes. In it he presents his views on the capture of the battery. Increased number of information signs describe the history of its displayed C-47 airplane. A new welcome center is under construction.

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Leave the 69th Brigade Path to Freedom onformation sign and proceed up the hill to the site choosen for the new memorial. (Approximately: 49.342661, -0.527650)

### **British Normandy Memorial**

The first stage of the new British Normandy Memorial was unvieled on 6 June 2019 by Prime Minister Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron. The center piece of the memorial is the 3-meter-high statue group of three

British soldiers landing on the beachhead, guns and the ready and expressions of determination and anxiety on their faces. Fittingly the forms bear no unit insignia or indication of rank, instead being representative of all British Army troops engaged in the liberation of Normandy. The memorial will eventually include stone columns upon which the names of the 22,442 British troops who perished in the Battle of Normandy will be engraved.

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### **Longues Battery**

The seaside observation bunker has been modified with a sturdy bridge that permits walking from the trail directly into the top level of the observation bunker to eliminate the previous dangerous climb up a metal ladder.

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### **Omaha Beach - Combat Medics Memorial (49.361776, -0.846994)**

A natural rock lies within the tidal range on Omaha Beach, invisible at high tide, but quite apparent at low tide. The ancient rock bears a plaque commemorating the heroic live-saving actions of the medics of the 16th Infantry Regiment. The rock marks the exact spot where Medic Section Leader Staff Sergeant Arnold Lambert established the first casualty collection station on 6 June 1944. While bandaging wounds and administering morphine, Sergeant Lambert was himself painfully wounded by shrapnel which passed through his right arm. Nevertheless, he dragged himself and a wounded comrade across the sand before passing out. <sup>1</sup>

Thirty-six medic team members who are listed below the English / French commemoration of Sergeant Lambert's actions. Seven medics are identified as having been killed that day.

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### **Normandy American Cemetery**

The path from the overlook down to the beaches has been gated and locked barring visitors from descending along the defiles used by Lieutenant John Spaulding and Captain Joseph Dawson to attack the German defenses along the top of the bluff.

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Leave the Big Red One Museum west on highway D514 to return to the roundabout at the exit from the Normandy American Cemetery. The museum entrance is on the third exit from the roundabout. (49.347697, -0.856392)

### **Overlord Museum**

Lotissement Omaha Center, 14710 Colleville-sur-Mer, France

<sup>1</sup> During the war Sergeant Arnold Raymond "Ray" Lambert was awarded a Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters, a Bronze Star with one oak leaf cluster, and a Purple Heart, with three oak leaf clusters. He returned to the United States for further treatment of his wounds and to meet, for the first time, his four-year-old son. Lambert, now 98 years old, resides in North Carolina.

Tel: +33 (0)2 31 22 00 55

Email : [contact@overlordmuseum.com](mailto:contact@overlordmuseum.com)

Web: <http://www.overlordmuseum.com/en/prepare-your-visit/>

Open every day March through December from 10:00 to 17:30; April, May, and September to 18:30; and June through August from 09:30 to 19:00. Closed Christmas and New Year holidays. Admission fee.

Formerly located near Falaise, the museum reopened facing the roundabout that accesses the Normandy American Cemetery in June 2013. The museum is identified by the several armored vehicles, a Bailey Bridge, and a full size tobruk sited along the highway. The museum tour begins with photos and explanations starting with the Versailles Treaty, the rise of Hitler, and the 1940 invasion of France. The main exhibit floor displays life-sized wartime scenes featuring over thirty-five Allied and German vehicles and guns including a M4A1 Sherman Tank, Higgins Boat, a M3A1 half-track armored personnel carrier, and German 88-mm gun shown in context with bits and piece of associated equipment. Explanations are in French, English, and German.

To regain the original tour route, return to the roundabout at the exit from the Normandy American Cemetery. Take the third exit onto Route d'Omaha Beach (D514) and continue 2.1 km; then turn right onto Rue Quincangrogne. After 750 m stop at the stone memorial on the left for Airfield A21c.

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From WN-65 continue on the road which becomes rue de la 2ème Division US as it curves west. After 300 m a small parking area on the right provides access to the beach front and the memorial. (49.366547, -0.865736)

### **Charles Shay Indian Memorial**

Charles Norman Shay, a Penobscot Indian, landed in the first wave on Omaha Beach on 6 June 1944 as a 19-year-old combat medic in Fox Company, 16th Regiment of the US 1st Infantry Division. Sheltering behind the one-meter-high sand dune, he treated wounded soldiers. Spotting more wounded struggling to escape the rising tide, Shay pulled them up to the shoreline despite being under enemy fire until he collapsed from exhaustion. His efforts were later recognized with a Silver Star.

Charles Shay returned to Normandy for the first time in 2007. Ten years later the retired Master Sergeant witnessed the dedication of Charles Shay Indian Memorial Park in Saint Laurent-sur-Mer. Central to the park is a granite turtle, which rests on Omaha Beach with its head aimed west across the Atlantic toward Indian Island. The turtle is a sacred animal that represents wisdom and longevity and Turtle Island in the Native American name for North America. The memorial was proposed by local resident Marie Legrand after she learned that Shay was a descendant of a 17th-century French baron who settled on the now-Maine seacoast and married the Penobscot tribal grand chief's daughter. Shay is also a direct descendant of Penobscot Chief Joseph Orono, who fought with General

## Washington in the Revolutionary War.<sup>2</sup>

To complete the tour, continue 450 m to the parking area marking by the junction between Easy Red and Easy Green sectors as identified by the small sign.

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#### Battery Maisy

Open every day April, May and September from 10:00 to 17:00; June, July, and August from 10:00 to 19:00. Admission fee.

When last viewed this German coastal installation had only recently been opened. Improved trench lines and increased signage that describes the type and purpose of individual structures make a visit easier and more informative. The corrected GPS co-ordinates are (49.376534, -1.061064).

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Leave the Vire River bridge west on highway D613 (becomes D974 upon crossing the bridge) and follow for 4 km. Turn left onto the access road to the museum (signed to PA La Fourchette). (49.304521, -1.192837)

#### Normandy Victory Museum

Parc d'Activités, La Fourchette, 50500 Carentan, France

Tel: +33 (0)2 33 71 74 94

Email: [info@normandy-victory-museum.com](mailto:info@normandy-victory-museum.com)

Web: <https://www.normandy-victory-museum.com/index.php/fr/>

Open every day from 1 April to 30 September from 09:30 to 19:00; and 1 October to 31 March from 10:00 to 17:30. Admission fee.

Opened only since 2017, the privately-owned museum and shops are still partially under construction. The site held airstrip A10 supporting P-47 'Thunderbolt' fighter-bombers. The airstrip opened on 19 June 1944 for the 50th Fighter Group. By November the fighting had moved forward, and the airstrip was abandoned. The location is identified from nearby highway N13 by a P-47.

The museum holds over 10,000 artifacts arranged in twenty scenes. The first depict life in Carentan, France under German occupation including French Resistance escape routes for downed pilots. Museum visitors walk through a sunken road with vegetation high on both sides to experience rifle and machine gun sounds and flashes from the Battle of the Hedgerows. The information cards in French and English describe the scenes but not the specific items in the display.

A small theater presents the stories from the Utah beach landings through the western section of the battlefield to the defense of Mortain. The video is almost entirely actual combat footage and some of the best we have seen. Subtitles are in French but voice over is in English.

The restaurant, bar, and shop for war paraphernalia that front the museum

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<sup>2</sup> Medic Charles Shay applied lifesaving efforts wherever the 1st Division was in combat including the Battle of Aachen, the Hürtgen Forest, and the Battle of the Bulge. Shay was captured after crossing the Rhine River near Remagen and held in Stalag VI-G near Bonn, Germany until liberated in April 1945. He later fought in the Korean War as a medic in the 3rd Infantry Division and was awarded the Bronze Star with two Oak Leaf clusters.

hide the actual size of the museum. The area behind the shops is all museum and much larger than one would expect. A ride in a half-track that passes around and through a small obstacle course near the parking area can be purchased.

This site ends the Chapter Six tour route. To begin the Chapter Seven tour, proceed to Ste-Mère-Église by returning to highway D974 and proceed west (left). In the first roundabout take the first exit towards Carentan / Ste-Mère-Église. After 13 km take exit D67 toward Ste-Mère-Église and follow into the center of the town.

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The short alleyway (49.408239, -1.316170) across from the church parking area has been renamed in honor of Colonel Robert Murphy. Robert Murphy was a pathfinder in Company A, 505th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division and may have been the first member of that division to hit the ground after being dropped at 00:15 on 6 June 1944. He completed his mission of locating and marking the drop zone for the regiment and then participated in the Battle for La Fère Bridge.

Murphy fought in North Africa, Italy, Normandy, and Holland receiving a Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts. His depictions of the 6 June landings were described in his book 'No Better Place to Die'. The book title refers to the response Murphy received from his company commander, First Lieutenant John 'Red Dog' Dolan during the battle for La Fère Bridge when Murphy informed Dolan that the unit was almost out of ammunition.

After the war, Murphy completed his law degree and practiced in Boston, Massachusetts and became a great friend of Ste-Mère-Église helping to establish the Airborne Museum. Later, he served two years as Massachusetts Assistant Attorney General while also active in numerous civic organizations. Murphy died in 2008 at age 83 leaving sixteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A bronze plaque on the wall of the building honors Murphy's contributions to the liberation of the town in French and English.

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### **Airborne Museum (Ste-Mère-Église)**

New hours: Open daily February through March and October through November from 10:00 to 18:00; April and September from 09:30 to 18:30; and May through August from 09:00 to 19:00. Admission fee.

The museum has greatly expanded with new buildings and a revised tour route. The first stop is in the new Waco Building featuring the Waco glider. Glass cases around the periphery of this circular, parachute-shaped building display personal effects, weapons, glider equipment, rations, supplies – the whole accumulation of items that would be necessary for an airborne assault.

The third building reviews the fighting that continued on 7 June in Ste-Mère-Église. Additional displays describe the battle for the La Fère Bridge. A supplement to the third building primarily holds glass-encased uniforms and airborne paraphernalia, a brief history of events surrounding the defeat of France

in 1940, and the contributions of French soldiers to D-Day. Small panels on the wall describe the actions of some individuals in the French forces.

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### ***Memorial des Parachutistes***

A rose granite memorial in the shape of a tongue of flame stands on the downward slope on the northern edge of the *Memorial des Parachutistes* field. The stone bears the insignia of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions above the image of a descending parachutist. Beneath are inscribed in French and English the words attributed to the Greek historian Herodotus, 'In peace, sons bury their fathers; in war, fathers bury their sons.'

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The Cauquigny information sign at the western end of the causeway is correctly located at (49.402838, -1.370394).

An additional memorial to the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment in the form of an upright aircraft wing has been erected adjacent to the sign. This 'Airborne Memorial' pays homage to the bravery and sacrifices of that unit during their actions in Normandy and their attack capturing the causeway on 9 June 1944.

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### **Charles DeGlopper MoH Memorial**

The Charles DeGlopper battle location has been enhanced by the erection of a large inscribed stone slab mounted upright on a fieldstone plinth flanked by flagpoles carrying the American and French flags. The stone bears the image of an infantryman carrying a BAR. The plaque identifies the soldier as DeGlopper and recognizes his award. An adjacent information sign recalls the events of his bravery, photographs, and his award citation.

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### **Angoville-au-Plain**

The cemetery of the St Côme and Damien church has an unassuming square stone bearing only the inscription 'REW.' Medic Robert E Wright died on 21 December 2013 at age 89 and one half of his ashes were buried in Angoville and the other half in his home town as he had requested. Those ashes are contained in a concrete chamber under the stone bearing his initials.

Medic Kenneth Jack Moore died on 7 December 2014 in Sonoma, California at age 90.

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### **D-Day Experience Museum**

2 Village de l'Amont

50500 Saint-Côme-du-Mont

+33 (0)2 33 23 61 95

Email: [contact@dday-experience.com](mailto:contact@dday-experience.com)

Web: <http://dday-experience.com/en/>

Open daily 13 January to 31 March from 10:00 to 18:00; April through September from 09:30 to 19:00; and October through December from 10:00 to 18:00. Closed during Christmas and New Year holidays and from 6 to 12 January. Admission fee.

Located in a prefab building behind the Dead Man's Corner Museum (also known as Centre Historique des Parachutistes US du J-Jour), the D-Day experience provides visitors a seven-minute simulated flight on a Douglas C-47 'Dakota' making its parachute drop into occupied France in the pre-dawn darkness of 6 June 1944. Entrance to this exhibit and Dead Man's Corner Museum are included in a single price.

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Leave the Champ de Hancock by reversing direction toward St-Côme-du-Mont; take the third exit from the large roundabout going southwest (Route Américaine, D971) and immediately park on the side of the road. The memorial is 50 m back along the roundabout. (49.314371, -1.259723)

### Lieutenant Colonel Robert Cole Memorial

Medal of Honor recipient Lieutenant Colonel Robert Cole's bayonet charge is commemorated with a new memorial dedicated to him aside the roundabout where he began the assault upon Ingouf Ferme. Framed by flagpoles flying American and French flags, a black granite obelisk bears an engraved Medal of Honor and the 101st Airborne Unit insignia. A inscribed stone plaque attached below the words 'Carentan Juin 1944' depicts Colonel Cole standing with pistol and rifle in hand shouting orders to two supporting troopers amid the barren vegetable fields of Carentan.

Information signs provide aerial photographs of the battlefield with text describing the bayonet charge and why this short section of roadway became known as Purple Heart Lane. Photographs of Cole, the text of his award citation, and a sketch by Private Carl E Davidson complete the story.

Continue 180 m on highway D971 to the farm driveway to continue the tour. (49.312572, -1.260845)

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### Musée du Debarquement d'Utah Beach

New hours: open January through May and October through November from 10:00 to 18:00; June through September from 09:30 to 19:00.

The area surrounding the museum has been extensively revamped. The Sherman tank 'Cannonball' that once straddled the beach exit through the sand dunes has been moved forward and in front of the museum. The exit now holds The Higgins Boat Monument consisting of a statue and memorial plaque to the inventor of the landing craft (LCVP or 'Higgins Boat') Andrew Jackson Higgins. His lumber and shipping company, headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana,

was responsible for manufacture of 20,000 of the flat-bottomed boats capable of navigating shallow waters which was modeled after the boats common in the swamps and marshes of Louisiana. The boats were instrumental in bringing military personal onto the beaches of Normandy and during most of the Pacific island assaults. Cheaply manufactured from plywood, the boats could carry either a thirty-six-man platoon or one jeep and a twelve-man squad ashore with the men exiting the craft down the boat's lowered bow ramp. General Dwight Eisenhower credited the Higgins boat as having been crucial to winning the war.

A model Higgins Boat is now situated in the place of honor in the beach exit. Before the boat, appearing as they have just landed, are statues of three American infantrymen as they apprehensively cross open beach. The trio of statues are fully equipped and with rifles at the ready with marvelously detailed weapons and clothing features.

The interior of the museum has been completely revamped with the displays being more personalized, more informative, and modernized in appearance. It is a completely different experience and very surprising when compared to prior visits. The suggested tour passes through ten sections ranging from descriptive examples of German Atlantic Wall defenses, Allied strategy for the various attacking forces, and ending with the attack towards Cherbourg. The beach defenses of WN-5 remain in the semi-circular room facing Utah beach.

An attached building houses a Marauder, B-26, twin-engine bomber 'Dinah Might'. Descriptive panels detail the plane's history and crew functions.

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### **Crisbecq Battery**

New hours: open April through November from 10:00 to 18:00 and July and August from 10:00 to 19:00.

The battery tour has been greatly improved with easier movement between positions and improved access into the various bunkers. Each structure now bears a description and signage with informational content. One is immediately struck by the size of the complete facility. Be aware, however, that the route has numerous stairs ascending over trenches or descending into bunkers.

Unfortunately, the observation bunker across the highway has been closed to visitors.