

Stephen Ambrose HISTORICAL TOURS



AN ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2004

April 2005

Victory in Europe!



VE DAY

London • Portsmouth • Normandy
Paris • Luxembourg • Wiesbaden
Leipzig • Torgau • Berlin

July 2005



Corps of Discovery Tour

Celebrate the Bicentennial of the
Lewis & Clark Expedition.

As President of Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours, I am pleased to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season. Our year, 2004, was remarkable indeed.

During this historic year, we celebrated two 60th Anniversaries: First our Italian Campaign Tour celebrated the anniversaries of the Invasion of Anzio, the battles for San Pietro and Monte Cassino, and finally the liberation of Rome on June 4. Starting in Paestum, the site of the Salerno invasion in 1943, our enthusiastic travelers followed the path of Gen. Mark Clark's 5th Army, up the Mediterranean side of the Italian Peninsula, all the way to Florence.

The long-awaited 60th Anniversary of the Normandy Invasion found the world focused on the countryside of William the Conqueror, and it seemed that half the world was there creating monumental traffic jams. The ceremonies held at the American Cemetery, overlooking Omaha Beach, were impressive, and President Bush delivered a stirring speech to the throngs of veterans and visitors gathered there. The highlight of the Anniversary was made even more significant by the death of former President Ronald Reagan the previous day.

In our newsletter last year, we announced that former 82nd Airborne paratrooper, Ken Russell, had been honored by the U.S. House of Representatives. Ken's heroism at Ste. Mere Eglise was finally officially recognized. He had been an unknown story in the great invasion, until 1988, when I stumbled upon him at a reunion at Fort Benning, Georgia. I discovered that Russell had a fantastic story, because he had hung on an adjacent spire of the church with Pvt. John Steele. Steele had been forever honored in the movie, *The Longest Day*, but Russell had slipped into obscurity, even though he had been decorated for valor that night, while Steele had been captured. Russell's heroics are now documented in my D-Day books.

But in a strange twist of fate, I am saddened to announce that Ken Russell died on June 6, 2004, exactly sixty years after he hung from that church belfry. Ken was a true American, a patriot, and loving husband, and most importantly to me, he was my friend. God bless Ken Russell and comfort his wife Dottie.

ANDREW AMBROSE *on the* BAND OF BROTHERS TOUR

Hello everyone,

A couple of months ago, I had the happy task of attending the 58th Band of Brothers reunion, which was held in beautiful Norfolk, Virginia. It was great to see all the veterans with their families and friends again. It was also a treat to see the guys who were with us for the 60th Anniversary of D-Day in Normandy earlier this year. In good health and spirits were: Darrell “Shifty” Powers, Paul Rogers, Earl McClung, Amos “Buck” Taylor, and John Agnew.

On June 5th of this year, I had the assignment to drive these five men around the Normandy countryside—avoiding stupendous military and non-military traffic—so they could be a part of many different festivities. People of all ages and nationalities would gather around these men wanting to thank them personally, and take their picture with them.

A couple of the Easy Company veterans joked, “This sure is a lot more enjoyable than the first time we came here!” Although it was said with a chuckle, it seemed to me to have another tone, the entirety of its meaning only their fellow warriors can understand. The rest of us knew how lucky we were to get this close to their feelings on such a meaningful day in their lives.

Forrest Guth and Buck Taylor will be with us on our May 2005 Band of Brothers Tour. The tour has been sold out for a while now, so we’re happy to announce that we’ve opened a second one,



L to R: Darrell “Shifty” Powers, Amos “Buck” Taylor, Paul Rogers, Earl McClung, John Agnew

September 12 - 26, 2005. Our September Band of Brothers Tour includes the wonderful element of being in Holland for the 61st Anniversary of Operation Market Garden. The Dutch always put on an amazing celebration to commemorate the beginning of their liberation from Nazi occupation on September 17, 1944. Parades, parachute drops, and re-enactments are just the beginning of what you’ll experience as a participant on this tour. Be sure to

reserve your seats today, as this tour will also fill up quickly.

I’d like to especially thank

Marie H. Lipton for sharing

her wonderful pictures from tours she and her late husband Carwood (former First Sergeant of Easy Company) went on with my late father, my mother Moira and brother Hugh. These pictures, as well as others people have sent us, will be included on a new “Photo” page we will soon be adding to our website. If you have any photos you would like to share, please mail them to us at the office, or e-mail me at andy@stephenambrosetours.com

Thank you for your continued interest in our company’s tour products. We are continuing our efforts to uphold the legacy of its founder, and pay tribute to the heroes of a grateful nation.

All good things,

Andy Ambrose
Vice President, Sales and Marketing



Marie Lipton

Gayle Gordon, Moira Ambrose, Carwood, Steve and Dick Winters enjoying boiled shrimp, 2001.

2004...from Page 1

July saw us celebrate Independence Day on the trail of Lewis and Clark as part of the bicentennial celebration. Our tour this year was highlighted with a spectacular hike to the "Hole in the Wall" along the Missouri River, and a reception at the Montana Club. Perfect weather followed us from below Great Falls, all the way to the Lolo Trail.

This coming year, 2005, we will inaugurate two new tours: The Pacific War will kick off in March to visit Pearl Harbor, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, and Iwo Jima. The tour sold out almost immediately, but we are working on a second tour. The only difference between the two is the second tour will substitute Tarawa and Kwajalien for Iwo Jima.

We will also celebrate the end of the war with our VE Day tour, ending in Berlin. We hope to be with you again on one of these new tours.

Finally, I am pleased to report the success of my two latest books. *Voices of Valor* was honored on the New York Times best-seller list, and the School Library Association chose, *Remember D-Day*, as "Best Book of 2004."



Ron Drez

VE DAY – VICTORY IN EUROPE:

April 27 – May 10, 2005

2005 commemorates the 60th Anniversary of Victory Europe, when Nazi Germany signed and ratified their unconditional surrender to Allied forces. Join us in London as we explore Bletchley Park and later, aboard the HMS Belfast, guest British veterans will join us for a tour of the ship and dinner. Then it's on to Portsmouth to visit the Southwick House, the SHAEF Headquarters. After we cross the channel, we will spend two full days in Normandy, tromping the battlefields and paying tribute to the fallen. From there, travel to Reims, France, where the surrender of German forces was signed. Our group will visit Weimar and the Buchenwald concentration camp before we continue to Torgau, and the famous place where the Russian and U.S. troops met up. This special commemorative tour will conclude in Berlin, where the German surrender was ratified. Berlin will undoubtedly have special events for this momentous occasion, and it is in Berlin that we will commemorate the 60th Anniversary of Victory Europe, and honor the veterans who made Victory possible.

We hope you all have received your tour brochures. Register soon and ensure yourself a spot on this unique, once-in-a-lifetime tour.



2005 TOURS

D-Day to the Rhine:	May 31-June 12 September 6-18 October 11-23
Band of Brothers	May 14-28 September 12-26
Iwo Jima 60 th Anniversary Tour:	March 3-14
VE Day 60 th Anniversary Tour:	April 27-May 10
Corps of Discovery Tour:	July 7-17 July 23-31
Italian Campaign:	September 20 - October 1
Civil War Tour:	October 27-November 2

CHILDHOOD CARVINGS

Three dates were carved into the wood of the second-floor windowsill of my room in the house where I grew up in Eksjo, Sweden. You could see them only if the window was open, and in that part of the world you did not leave the window open a lot until May or June...and it was then that the dates were carved.

The first was 6-6-44. I carved it because somehow as an 8-year-old growing up in neutral Sweden, I knew it was a momentous day. It was the day hope was born again over a stormy Europe. The other two dates that earned a spot on that windowsill were May 7 and May 8, 1945. May 7 was the day most of the shooting stopped and May 8 was the date of Germany's unconditional surrender. I vividly remember doing the carving and felt it was worth the possible response of a stern father to destruction of property.

I was almost 4 in 1939 and I remember the German invasions of our neighbors, Denmark and Norway. I never felt afraid, but there were things like coffee and sugar that my mother stashed away in the sofa by the kitchen table.

This past summer I had a chance to walk the beaches of Omaha and Utah with the very people



who came ashore that same day I did the carving. Some of them had come from the sky. Crossing the Channel in gliders or C-47's they had bravely faced the future and affected history. To see them return where they fought that momentous day and hear them relate in a few short words about the experiences they had to their children and grandchildren was indeed a moving experience.

In 1944, when the news of the Invasion came, it was a big event—even for an 8-year old. We listened to the shortwave. The blackout curtains were never used again. My mother got out a fresh can of the stashed away coffee and celebrated with all the neighbors.

I closed the door to my room and carved the date on the windowsill. Never imagining that decades later I would have the privilege to not only get to know the men who came ashore that day, but to walk with them on the very sand where they risked their lives for liberty.

Pierre Hjartberg

*Director of Educational Travel Development
Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours*

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY:

One of the highlights of June 6th was the ceremony at the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach. President Chirac spoke first on behalf of France, followed by President Bush – both men’s speeches were touching and inspired. Below are excerpts from the speeches.

PRESIDENT JACQUES CHIRAC

“D-Day veterans, Mr. President of the United States of America, ladies and gentlemen: We stand here on hallowed ground, in a place engraved forever in our memories for the role it has played in our history against the dark night of oblivion. We are gathered here today to pay homage, to pay tribute to the soldiers of freedom, to the legendary heroes of Operation Overlord. And against the swift passage of time, our presence together today is, indeed, a reminder to younger generations of the true significance of a war that continues to shape our understanding of the world.

Sixty years ago, these soldiers of freedom took up arms to ensure the triumph of the values to which men and women everywhere aspire and subscribe – a vision of humanity and human dignity, of peace, freedom, and democracy.”

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

“Mr. President, thank you for your gracious welcome to the reunion of allies. History reminds us that France was America’s first friend in the world. With us today are Americans who first saw this place at a distance, in the half-light of a Tuesday morning long ago. Time and providence have brought them back to see once more the beaches and the cliffs, the crosses and the Stars of David.

The generation we honor on this anniversary, all the men and women who labored and bled to save this continent, took a more practical view of the military mission. Americans wanted to fight and win and go home. And our GIs had a saying: The only way home is through Berlin. That road to V-E Day was hard and long, and traveled by weary and valiant men. And history will always record where that road began. It began here, with the first footprints on the beaches of Normandy.”

June 6, 2004 marked the 60th Anniversary of D-Day, commemorated by millions around the world, and thousands of people in Normandy. Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours brought close to 800 people—the largest group of people and veterans to travel with any tour company. With 98 veterans—52 of them D-Day veterans—SAHT brought America’s sons to Europe. Every branch of service was represented, with ranks raging from P.F.C. and Seaman to Colonel and Captain – soldiers who participated in both theaters; heroes, each and every one of them. We heard stories from Walter Ehlers, a Medal of Honor recipient; Elbert Legg, who established the first cemetery in Normandy on D-Day; Robert Zimmer, a P.O.W. who was freed by Patton’s 3rd Army; Albert “Spoonie” Sponheimer, a medic who covered almost the full length of Omaha beach, helping the wounded; the Spahr brothers, Carl, Jr. and Lloyd, who left their family to join the Navy, one in Normandy, and one in the Pacific. Each veteran’s story is unique, touching, scary, and heroic – at once humble and proud. They were boys who valiantly fought in the name of freedom, earning numerous Purple Hearts, enough Silver and Bronze Stars to light up the Normandy sky, and Oak Leaf Clusters to cover a forest.

COMMEMORATE THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF ITALY:

April 29 – May 7, 2005

Joined by Sen. George McGovern, Lindy Boggs, American Legion Members, Military VIPs, WWII Veterans and their friends and families, we will explore and study the Italian Campaign in Rome, Anzio and Florence, and attend the special anniversary ceremonies honoring the veterans who fought and died in Italy sixty years ago. Tour participants will attend 60th Anniversary ceremonies at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno on May 2, 2005; and in Florence on May 5, 2005, our group will participate in a wreath laying service at the Florence American Cemetery and Memorial. Join us in honoring the WWII veterans and remembering the sacrifices of all who served in Italy, one of the least known about, yet crucial, parts of the war.

If you would like more information on this tour, please contact the office.



STAY TUNED...

for details regarding SAHT's
Steamboatin' World War II Adventure
December 3 – 12, 2005

includes a *Christmas – New Orleans Style* hotel package



Mississippi Queen passengers enjoying holiday bonfires along the river.

Join Ron and Judy Drez in celebrating the holiday season in their own hometown and enjoy the sights and sounds of the French Quarter. Then we will sail roundtrip from New Orleans for 7 nights aboard the Mississippi Queen – a Steamboatin' Adventure with an added World War II theme. Ron Drez will be the featured guest lecturer, accompanied by two of the WWII heroes he profiled in his book *Twenty-Five Yards of War*: Arthur Abramson and Len Lomell.

Details coming soon!

RETURN TO GUAM:

Veterans of the War in the Pacific were invited back to Guam to celebrate with the Chamorro people the 60th anniversary of their Liberation. 21 veterans returned for a celebration that included a dinner with the National Park Service, breakfast with the Governor where they were presented with a medal and a certificate of appreciation, an 80-boat Liberation Day Parade, and the rededication of the War Dog Memorial.

One of the returning veterans, Frank “Blackie” Hall, wrote to us about his trip and made the following reflections:

“My old buddies, Bob Glenn, Ron Lucas, Lou Statile, and I stood alone on our landing spot where we jumped out of the Alligators 60 years ago and looked up at those heights we climbed that first day. Each of us had our own private thoughts about our close friends we lost that first day and the days that followed. We won’t forget that experience, that feeling of sadness, nostalgia, and the memory of our old friends who never lived beyond 20 or 21, never knew the joy of a lifetime partnership or raising a family.

With all the celebration, the best part of all was to meet some wonderful people of Guam. There were those our age who survived the terror of the occupation by the Japanese, there were their children, and their grandchildren. They treated us like family, and not only the ones we spent some time with such as Natty Calvo and her large family. Everywhere we went we were greeted by complete strangers who came up to us, shook our hands and



said, “Thank you.” And to me, the frosting on the cake is that they have taught their history to their children and to their grandchildren. They know their history. They value their liberty, they know it doesn’t come cheap, and as a group, they are the most loyal, patriotic Americans I have ever met.”

*Cpl. Frank “Blackie” Hall,
F-2-21, 3rd Marine Div. 1942-1945
Bougainville, Guam, Iwo Jima*

This March, we are operating a sold-out tour to the Pacific, exploring and studying the battlefields and war memorials in Hawaii, Saipan, Tinian, Guam and Iwo Jima. We are fortunate to have two guest veterans with us—Frank Hall and Arthur Abramson—as well as six WWII veterans who have signed up for the tour. The best possible historians are leading the tour, Capt. Ron Drez—SAHT’s lead historian and WWII expert and Col. John Ripley, who is considered to be the foremost authority on the Marine’s participation in the War in the Pacific.

CONTACT US



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SNAPSHOTS...

Rick and Sharon Greene, along with their mother, Beatrice Campbell, in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.



WWII Veterans return to Normandy with SAHT – June 2004



Jim McGann and Gene Coulson (a D-Day veteran) first met on our D-Day to the Rhine Tour last October, when they were paired together as roommates. They traveled again with us this past September on our Italian Campaign. How's that for camaraderie!



WWII Veterans of the 410th Bomb Group with the Mayor in Gosfield, England

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*Happy
Holidays*