

Normandy D-Day Landings 5th - 9th April: A tour for **Charles Dent** and friends visited the

landing grounds of the greatest military operation in history to understand why and how the Canadian, American and British Allies came ashore believing in their cause, their leadership and in themselves. **David Winn** GBG guided them throughout the 5-day tour.

They stood on the Normandy assault beaches of **Sword, Juno, Utah, 'Bloody' Omaha** and **Gold**, where the only Victoria Cross was won on D-Day. They toured the Airborne Landing sites at **Ste Mere Eglise, Pegasus Bridge, Ranville** and **Merville** to learn of those momentous events of the 6th June some 74 years ago.



Touring Together

Charles Dent, John Furness, Jeff Kindleysides, Fiona & Joe Goodhart, Matthew Ingle, David Lowes, James Crathorne & David Winn



Ranville CWGC Cemetery



They walked the cliffs at Arromanches **Arromanches** and visualised the logistics that enabled this massive seaborne assault landing, the German heavy guns at **Longues** and the scene of the US Ranger's dramatic attack on **Ponte du Hoc**. Whilst in Normandy they visit Bayeux's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery, the famous **Bayeux Tapestry, Cathedral** and a **Calvados winery**.



Ponte du Hoc



*Above:
Pegasus
Bridge*



*Right:
UTAH
Beach*

'Wellington's Portugal' 20th-24th May: A Peninsular War Tour to Wellington's Portuguese Battlefields. Bedford trio **Andy, David and Peter** having toured Salamanca and Waterloo previously decided to venture on a tour of the **Peninsula War battlefields** of **Bussaco Ridge** where Wellington's strategic genius saw the demise of Massena. They walked Wellington's early battle sites of **Rolica** and **Vimeiro** and contemplated his vision and strategy at the **Lines of Torres Vedras**. They examined Wellington's decision making at **Oporto** where Nosey's army routed Soult's French into full retreat. With the wines and restaurants of Portugal's northern city they certainly fared better than our ancestors who soldiered and suffered here during the Napoleonic Wars

Touring Together

David Twigden, Andy Illingworth & Peter Wilkinson



David, Andy & Peter above the Torres Vedras Lines



Vimeiro – Where 'Line beat Column'



Outside the Bussaco Museum



Outside Wellington's Headquarters at Pero Negro



David & Andy



Graham's Port Lodge - Oporto



Inside Wellington's Headquarters at Pero Negro



Graham's for dinner – serious business



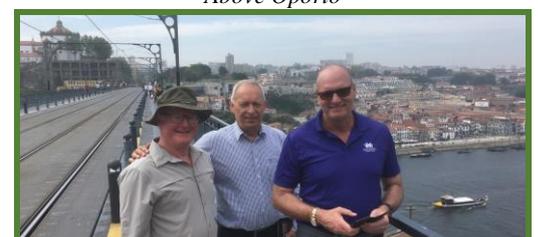
Sobral de Monte Agraço



Wellington's Headquarters Bussaco Ridge with the 18 Kilometre battlefront beyond



Above Oporto



'Vineyards & Victory Tour' 30th May – 9th June: A 'Battle n' Bottle'
 Wine tour with Guru Al Spoler to Alsace, Champagne and Waterloo in Belgium visiting some of the most legendary wine locales in Europe.

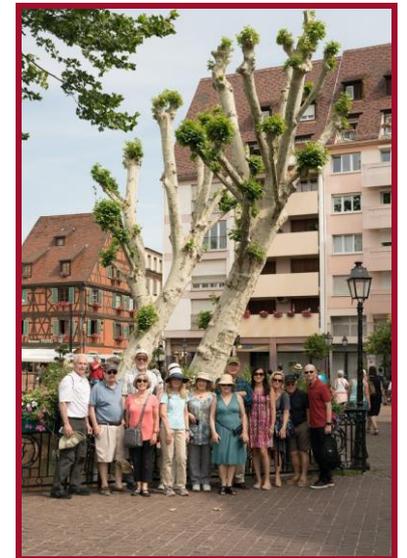
Alsace, with its manicured vineyards climbing the lower reaches of the **Vosges Mountains**, is home to what are arguably the world's greatest white wines.



Al Spoler



Some fans of the Baltimore Ravens attended!.



Battle guide Mike Sheil took the tour to the sights where the 'Dough Boys' fought in 'The Great War'





An emotional history lesson for some!



Judge Ron Karasic & Lyn Evans meet up yet again on an Al Spoler tour



At the Meuse Argonne Memorial



With Napoleon at Waterloo



Vickie, Stephanie, Suzanne, Mary, Ali, Dee & Bernadette



The Memorial to the British Army that fought at Waterloo

Touring Together

*Ed Wood & Dee Sullivan
Grace Folsom & Ray Ahlberg, Alison Cooper,
AJ Young & Stephanie Lin, Mary Madden,
Ron Karasic, Suzanne Zantop
Bill & Bernadette Dunn, Lyn Evans,
Al Spoler & Vickie Gray*



*A huge thank you to
Vickie Gray for all these great
photos*



Waterloo battlefield – Last day of the tour. Farwell Dinner and Al Spoler's wine talk at the Grand Hotel in Waterloo that evening.

The Brenthurst Foundation Somme Battlefield 'Realities and Reflections' Tour 12th-14th September 2018



The Brenthurst Foundation is a Johannesburg-based think-tank established by the Oppenheimer family in 2004 to support the Brenthurst Initiative in seeking ways to fund African development and to organize conferences on African competitiveness.

The intent of the Board's tour of the Great War 1916 Somme battlefield was to generate and facilitate lively discussion and debate concerning issues that were not only of historical interest, but also of those which are equally relevant to the examination of the contemporary world and corporate life. While no previous historical knowledge was either assumed or required, the Board were presented illustrated read-in beforehand to enable all members of the Brenthurst Foundation Board to gain the maximum benefit from their short but memorable sojourn on the Somme battlefield.



Touring Together

Dr Greg Mills (South Africa), Major General (rtd) Dickie Davis (UK), Mr Jonathan Oppenheimer (South Africa), Mr Kgalema Motlanthe (Former President of South Africa), Mr Hailemariam Dessalegn Boshe (Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and his wife) Roman Tesafaye Abneh his former First Lady, Dr Alberto Trejos (Costa Rica), Ambassador Juan Carlos Pinzon (Colombia), Ambassador Torben Brylle (Denmark), Ambassador Barry Desker (Singapore), Mr Jaco du Plessis (South Africa), Ms Leila Jack (South Africa)

The Study Tour

After an introductory presentation examining political-military relations and the strategies of the Allied leaders and their German opponents in a global war, Brenthurst looked at the tactics, technologies and leadership of the forces committed at a series of carefully selected locations on the Somme battlefield, and not least expose many tales of valour and the scale of the sacrifice entailed. Furthermore, they considered how decisions were made, and how the armies strove to learn from their experiences in the battle and to adapt and innovate in contact.



The tour finished at Delville Wood with a visit to the South African National Memorial where the 1st South African Infantry Brigade made is remembered for sacrifice and Western Front debut as part of the 9th (Scottish) Division. The South Africans held the wood until 19 July, at a cost in casualties similar to those of many British brigades on 1 July. When captured, the village and wood formed a salient, which could be fired on by German artillery from three sides. In just four days between 15th and 19th July, the SA Brigade, numbering only 3150 men, attached to the 9th Scottish Division lost 766 men with the dead outnumbering the wounded four to one. At the height of the Battle of Delville Wood, enemy artillery fire reached 400 shells a minute on 12 Jul 2016

Most attacks were defeated by defensive fire power and the effects of inclement weather, which frequently turned the battlefield into a slew of mud. Delville Wood is well preserved with the remains of trenches, a museum and a monument to the South African Brigade at the Memorial.

'The Brenthurst Foundation Board members thoroughly enjoyed their recent tour of the First World War Western Front battlefields from Neuve Chapelle to the Somme, arranged by Mungo Melvin Strategic and Corporate Battlefields. Professionally researched and led, Mungo Melvin and Graeme Cooper provided a series of stimulating insights into the strategy and tactics involved, not forgetting to highlight the terrible human cost for all the forces engaged. As an organisation committed to Africa's development, the Board members particularly appreciated the concluding moving visit to the South African memorial at Delville Wood.'Major General (rtd) Dickie Davis



Graeme & Jaco du Plessis



Roman Tesafaye Abneh & Barbara Taylor

Following 17 years of enjoyable and memorable moments touring Europe's battlefields with some great people 'Cooper's last' scheduled battlefield tour took in the **Normandy D-Day beaches, Vimy Ridge, Crecy, Agincourt, The Somme, Messines, Ypres** and a 'Farewell Walk and Dinner' at **Waterloo**



The team at The Green Howard owned tram stop on Gold Beach which Stanley Hollis fired at from his landing craft on D-Day thinking it was a German bunker.

Touring Together!

Alison & David Blackley, Richard Chiverrell, Brenton Clark, Mike Damant, Peter Dessauer, Lyn Evans, Donald Gloag, Gregor Mansfield, Janty Marsden & Andy Sherwood, Hazel & Frank Newton, Anne Paul, Joe de Pledge, Robert Pocock, Bill de Quick, Anne & Jack Stewart, Julie & Brook Thomas, Faye Torrens & Graeme Marshall, Richard Towns, Alison & Graeme Cooper



No better place to start a D-Day Tour than in the War Room at Southwick House



Bayeux Military Cemetery at Capt Terry's grave



Anne Stewart relating the story of Doreen Dew's brother Captain Terry



At the Longues German gun battery



With Arlette post breakfast



Glasses empty! Donald & Graeme



Breakfast in Café Gondree



With Messieurs & Madam Laurent in their courtyard where Hollis VC final action began that day in 1944



VC among the rhubarb!



Sergeant-Major Stan Hollis, of Middlesbrough was the only soldier awarded a VC on D-Day. He was a giant with a volcanic temper and hated being called a hero. Stanley Hollis braved a wall of heavy machine gun fire - twice - during the landings. He had previously fought at El Alamein, Dunkirk and the Sicily landings. He was

wounded so many times he was branded 'The Man They Couldn't Kill'. Yet he was haunted by his memories, often crying for days at a time with guilt over a German teenager he gunned down. Hollis, at 31 was one of the most battle-hardened soldiers in the British Army.



In the very same Rhubarb patch where Hollis saved the day



Beny-sur-Mer CWGC cemetery:
The furthest inland that the Allies reached on 6th June.



Then there was the Calvados tasting



Calvados at Le Grand Fumichon



Pont du Hoc



Then to Monet's Garden



Then to Crecy



SWORD Beach



Faye, Anne & Tub



Monet's with Robert, Graeme, Richard & Donald



Then to Agincourt – Donald, Andy & Frank



Then to the Somme



Where Brenton found his relative



*Beers in Arras Grand Place
L-R: Mike, Gregor, Janty, Andy & Brenton*



*Where the Australian & Canadian Divisions fought to take Mouquet Farm.
Here the Germans had their advance Headquarters on their Second Line*



Below: On the German Line at Beaumont Hamel overlooking the famous sunken Lane. L-R: Brenton, Dave, Robert, John, Janty, Gregor & Andy



Joe lays a wreath at the Pozieres Australian Memorial





Delville Wood where the South Africans suffered



Alison at The Canadian Memorial at Vimy



Then to Ypres – Janty & Andy



Dave, Alison & Team at Passchendaele – Crest Farm Memorial



Menin Gate Ceremony



Frank & Hazel presenting at Tynecot Cemetery



With Napoleon



Then to Waterloo with Richard Towns! Less the migrant stowaway



Richard - Happy



Bois de Paris ... Beyond, the view the Prussians would have experienced at 5pm on that infamous day.





A Sherwood we engaged with!



Hougoumont



Customs from Agincourt remembered



Thanks to **Mike Sheil** GBG for his guiding excellence and his intimate knowledge of the 1918 actions of the 'Dough Boys!'

Thanks to **Richard Towns & Robert Lodge** for their continued support from High Easter Lodges Coaches ... always second to none service



Thanks to **David Winn** GBG for his Normandy expertise on **Charles Dent's** Tour

Cooper's Last Tour? – 'Or so he thought'

Well it was not. While fitness, passion and enjoyment for the craft remains we are onward!

We are now **'just working differently'** – no more advertising tours seeking new custom just informing past guests and friends what is planned so they can join in if they wish. Details on request.

Non-Advertised 2019 Tours with vacancies

- 21st - 24th March: **'The Devil's Paintbrush'**- The Somme and Passchendaele battlefields
- 10th - 18th August: **'Malaya at War'** History Conference & Tour
- 13th - 23rd September: **Wine Tour of Piedmont** by Al Spoler



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Graeme & Ali