



D-Day: Operation OVERLORD & Europe's Liberation An Expedition for Students, Alumni & Friends of SMU

MAY 19-27, 2025

Join SMU's Center for Presidential History's Jeffrey A. Engel and Essential History Expeditions' Brian DeToy for an on-site exploration of London, Windsor, Portsmouth, Normandy and Paris, walking the cities and beaches where Churchill schemed, Ike commanded, flyers downed pints and soldiers fought for Europe's liberation. This intergenerational tour offers course credit for students, and for alumni and friends the opportunity to see the places history took place — and to relive a bit of college life.



Highlights: Interactions with current SMU students and leadership. London, Churchill Cabinet War Rooms, Cambridge, ULTRA at Bletchley Park, Windsor, Southwick House, *MV Normandie* Channel Crossing, Normandy & D-Day Beaches including Pointe du Hoc and OMAHA with its beautiful American Cemetery, Bayeux & its Tapestry, magical Mont St Michel and Paris in WWII!

1 NIGHT LONDON/1 NIGHT WINDSOR, 5 NIGHTS NORMANDY/1 NIGHT PARIS

Join us for a fully guided and immersive tour of the people and places of Operation OVERLORD, the June 1944 invasion of Normandy that began Europe's liberation from Nazi rule. Participants will walk the beaches and cliffs, learn from local experts and guest lecturers, and, if desired, investigate and role-play a renowned (or reviled) figure from history. Enjoy plenty of time to explore these iconic sites on your own and to reconnect with SMU friends and students in some of Europe's most scenic sites. Connect with current SMU students through meaningful discussions and mentorship.

This trip features in-depth guided tours and lectures for all sites, all admission fees and transportation, all lodging and most meals (as detailed on the itinerary). Airfare not included.

Trip preparation: Pre-departure lectures and study groups led by Dr. Jeffrey Engel, mandatory for students and optional for alumni and friends of SMU.

D-Day: Operation OVERLORD & Europe's Liberation Daily Itinerary

Monday, May 19th: Introduction to London in WWII

- ◆ Arrive in London and check in to lodgings
- ◆ Afternoon welcome lunch, overview of the expedition & opening lecture
- ◆ Walking tour of central London from Parliament Square to Whitehall to Trafalgar Square
- ◆ Group visit to Churchill Cabinet War Rooms

Tuesday, May 20th: Airpower in Europe – RAF Duxford & Cambridge, ULTRA Secret at Bletchley Park and Windsor

- ◆ RAF Duxford, a WWII base for British and American air groups
- ◆ Historic and gorgeous Cambridge
- ◆ Cambridge American Cemetery, where 3,811 of our war dead lie in repose
- ◆ Bletchley Park: Visit the ULTRA Code Breakers compound – a vital component in Allied victory and real-life inspiration for the recent Oscar-winning film “The Imitation Game”
- ◆ Time to explore beautiful Windsor, in the shadow of the famous castle

Wednesday, May 21st: Southwick House & Seaborne Preparations for OVERLORD, and Cross-Channel Ferry to Normandy

- ◆ Southwick House: HQ of the Allied High Command in the days before the invasion, and the location where, in the dark hours of night with torrential rains beating against the windows, Ike made the decision – “Let’s go!”
- ◆ Group lunch at Golden Lion Inn in Southwick Village
- ◆ Discussion of D-Day shipping in Portsmouth harbor along the quays
- ◆ *MV Normandie* Channel Crossing with dinner on your own
- ◆ Check in to Normandy lodgings

Thursday, May 22nd: British Airborne, Beaches & Bayeux

- ◆ British 6th Airborne Division at Pegasus Bridge
- ◆ Critical capture of the Merville Battery by British paratroopers
- ◆ Ranville British Cemetery
- ◆ Canadians and Free French at JUNO Beach
- ◆ British at GOLD Beach and Mulberry Harbor at Arromanches
- ◆ Lecture and group dinner at one of the many great restaurants in Bayeux

Friday, May 23rd: American Airborne & UTAH Beach

- ◆ UTAH Beach landings and 4th Infantry Division
- ◆ 101st Airborne Division at Ste Marie du Mont/Band of Brothers (Easy Company) at Brecourt Manor
- ◆ 82nd Airborne Division at La Fiere Bridge outside Ste Mere Eglise
- ◆ Walking tour of Ste Mere Eglise including famed church; lunch on your own in first town liberated by Americans
- ◆ La Cambe German Cemetery
- ◆ Bayeux Tapestry Museum, the millennium old story of William the Conqueror
- ◆ Walking tour of old town Bayeux, including the Cathedral
- ◆ Dinner on your own in one of many great restaurants in old Bayeux

Saturday, May 24th: Pointe du Hoc and OMAHA Beach

- ◆ Pointe du Hoc and the cliff assault with the 2nd Ranger Battalion
- ◆ OMAHA Beach western end and 29th Division, 5th Ranger Battalion and American Mulberry Harbor
- ◆ OMAHA Beach eastern end and 1st Infantry Division; group lunch on beach
- ◆ Climb the cliffs from the beach to the museum and cemetery (bus option available)
- ◆ Visit the profoundly beautiful and moving Normandy American Cemetery
- ◆ Optional social hour with reflections; dinner on your own

Sunday, May 25th: Mont St Michel

- ◆ Enchanting island of Mont St Michel – explore the ancient monastery and narrow streets and alleys of this amazing village perched on a rock in the bay
- ◆ Return to Bayeux and dinner on your own

Monday, May 26th: COBRA, Mont Ormel & On to Paris

- ◆ Operation COBRA and the American break out of Normandy
- ◆ Awe-inspiring heights of Mont Ormel
- ◆ On to Paris and afternoon on your own with all of Paris’ delights
- ◆ Farewell group dinner and lecture with SMU’s Dr Jeffrey Engel

Tuesday, May 27th: Departure and Onward Journeys

- ◆ Departures from Paris

For more information, contact the Center for Presidential History at cphinfo@smu.edu or
Essential History Expeditions at
Sheryl@historyexp.com;
call 214.768.3210; see historyexp.com

- ◆ Pricing: \$6,650 double occupancy; \$800 single supplement
- ◆ Itinerary subject to minor changes
- ◆ International airfare not included
- ◆ Hotels as follows or similar:
 - ◆ London: Hilton Waldorf
 - ◆ Windsor: Sir Christopher Wren
 - ◆ Normandy: Tardif Noble Guest House (adult); Le Lion d’Or (student)
 - ◆ Paris: Hilton Paris Opera

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Jeffrey A. Engel is founding director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University and a Senior Fellow of the John Goodwin Tower Center for Political Studies. Author or editor of ten books on American foreign policy, his latest is *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*.

Essential History Expeditions’ president, expert historian and guide, Lt Col (Ret) Brian DeToy, PhD served as Director of the Defense & Strategic Studies program at the United States Military Academy, West Point from 2007-13. He has appeared in numerous documentaries for programming such as History, Discovery, A&E and Military channels. He is also an accomplished author and presenter at international history conferences.

