By the evening of D-Day, more than 150,000 Allied troops had landed on the coast of France and had breached Adolf Hitler’s once impregnable “Atlantic Wall.” The war, however, was a long way from over. For the next 80-days the world fixated its eyes on the battles raging in Normandy. After almost five years of war, the Allies were poised to decided the fate of Adolf Hitler’s vaunted “1,000 Year Reich.” Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours’, The Beaches and Beyond, tour will take guests from the D-Day beaches to the inland campaigns in the heart of Normandy. We will follow the American, British and Canadian armies as they fight for Caen and Cherbourg; stand with the GIs of the 30th Infantry Division as they stop the last great German offensive in Normandy in its tracks and see where Free Polish forces closed the German’s last avenue of escape at Falaise. We then follow the Allies as they race to liberate Paris.
Day 1 - Flight to Paris
Book your overnight flight to Paris’s Charles de Gaulle airport (CDG). You must arrive by 10 a.m. on Day 2. If you cannot find a flight that will arrive by 10 a.m., we can help you book an additional night pre-tour.

Day 2 - Arrival in Paris and the Lair of the Fox
After group arrival in Paris, we will begin our journey to Normandy, stopping en route to see German General Erwin Rommel’s forward headquarters at La Roche Guyon. At this site we will have an opportunity to discuss the situation the Desert Fox faced as he sought to defend the coast of France from Allied invasion. After leaving Rommel’s headquarters we go to Calais to see the massive Battery Todt and some of the most formidable fortifications the Wehrmacht had along the Atlantic Wall. Here at La Coupole Museum we also visit the construction sites for the flying bombs and rockets, the V-1 and V-2, destined to rain terror and destruction on England. We will discuss the important part these V-weapons played in the course of the Normandy and Northwest Europe Campaign.

Day 3 - The Day the Devils Dropped In
Our visits today will take us to places where the Sixth British Airborne Division—known as the “Red Devils”—and other British troops fought to hold the left shoulder of the invasion against some of the most determined German counter attacks in Normandy. Visits in this area will include the outstanding Airborne Museum at Ranville as well as the Merville Battery where, against impossible odds, British paratroopers took out a German battery position that threatened to wreak havoc on Allied forces landing on Sword Beach. We will then visit Breville and the Chateau St. Come where the weary paratroopers repulsed repeated German armored attacks for almost a month. From the left flank of the landings we will travel to the magnificently preserved Hillman Redoubt, the key German fortification that blocked the way to the D-Day objective of Caen. Our final stop of the day will be Bieville and Perriers to discuss the attack by the 21st Panzer Division on the evening of June 6 that almost threw the Allies back into the sea.
Day 4 - Canada’s Contribution
Travelers to the D-Day beaches rushing to get to Omaha Beach, St. Mere Eglise or Pegasus Bridge often overlook the Canadian landings at Juno Beach. It should be remembered, however, that Juno beach was the second costliest of D-Day and that no other Allied contingent advanced further inland than the Canadians on June 6. We start our day at the world class Canadian museum at Courseulles, where in addition to the artifacts and displays we will have an opportunity for a guided tour into some of the best preserved German beach defenses in Normandy. From Courseulles we follow the exact route the Canadian forces took as they battled toward Montgomery’s D-Day objective at Caen. Along the way we will stop at Authie, The Abbaye Ardennes, where the SS executed 20 Canadian POWs, and Carpiquet Airport, key to the city of Caen. This was the scene of some of the most intense fighting of the entire Normandy Campaign. After finishing up with the Canadian battlefields we will make a few stops along Gold Beach to discuss the struggles in the drive to Bayeux and the linking up of the U.S. and British forces. Our stops will include: the site of Stan Hollis’ VC actions; the battlefield of Crepon, the remains of the temporary British harbor at Arromanches, the massive German gun battery at Longues-sur-Mer and the oft-forgotten British Commando fight for the village of Port-en-Bessin.

Day 5 - Armored Crucible
Today we explore some of the desperate armored battles fought between Allied and German tank crews as the Allies attempted to get into Caen. We then see how the Germans fought for their lives in Normandy in their attempt to prevent the Allied breakout into the heart of France. We study the armored battles associated with the fighting around Caen including Operation Goodwood and the first appearance of the dreaded King Tiger tank. Next is Operation Epsom and the battle for Hill 112—one of the bloodiest fights of the entire Normandy campaign. We will also visit Villars Bocage where, on June 13, 1944, Panzer ace Michael Wittman single-handedly destroyed a British armored battalion with just one tank. Credited with 138 tank kills, Wittman survived the day and stopped one Montgomery’s best chances of getting into Caen.
Day 6 - Beyond the Beachhead: The 29th Division from Omaha Beach to St. Lo.

Even though they suffered the worst casualties of any Allied unit on June 6, 1944, the fighting was not over for the men of the 29th Infantry Division. Our day will begin at the Overlord Museum just behind the American cemetery at Omaha Beach. Here, we will have an opportunity to see one of France’s most outstanding collections of rare tanks and vehicles, including rare examples of the German Mark IV and Mark V Panther tanks that were staples of German forces in Normandy. After visiting the museum, we begin an extensive tour of Omaha Beach. We will visit all five of the draws off the beach as well as areas of fighting immediately inland from the beach. We will then stop at the site of Frank Peregrory’s epic single-handed attack on German positions outside of Grandcamp, for which for the young Virginian earned the Medal of Honor. Next we will stop at the bridge at Isigny where the 29th was finally able to secure a link-up between the forces landing at Utah and Omaha Beaches. The group will follow the route taken by elements of the division as they relieved the Rangers on Pointe-du-Hoc. As the 29ers did, we will then push on toward St. Lo, stopping to visit the 29th’s battlefields along the Elle River and atop Purple Heart Hill. Our day will finish at the Major Howie Monument on the edge of St. Lo.

Day 7 - Devils Drop In Again

Today we focus on some of the epic battles fought by U.S. Airborne forces as they sought to protect the landings of U.S. forces at Utah Beach as well as preparing the way for the eventual breakout from the beachhead. Our day will begin at Ste-Mere-Eglise where we visit the world renowned airborne museum. From the museum we travel to La Fiere and then St. Saveur Le Vicomte to study the paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne as they fought to secure the Douve River crossings that had to be in Allied hands before the advance toward Cherbourg could proceed. After exploring the All-American battlefields in and around Ste-Mere-Eglise, we will turn our attention to the 101st to visit some of their significant, but often overlooked battlefields. Our stops will include the XYZ Complex where Sergeant Harrison Summers knocked out a German position containing 150 German defenders as well as Ravenoville’s famous Marmion Farm.
Day 8 - Cutting off the Cotentin Peninsula
The advances of the American paratroopers and infantrymen as they battled their way across the Cotentin Peninsula to cut off, and then capture, the vital port of Cherbourg is our objective today. We then shift our focus to, perhaps, America’s most famous general, George S. Patton and his Third Army. Beginning at the Chateau of Nehou where Patton established his first headquarters in France, we then proceed to the scene of some of the most intense fighting in the struggle to cut off the peninsula, including the well-preserved, and unique, Luftwaffe Bunker at Hill 145 and Barneville. From there we will follow “Old Blood and Guts” and his men to Avranches and then the bridge at Pontaubault that opened the door to the interior of France for the Americans.

Day 9 - Operation Luttich: Hitler’s Last Chance in France
Battered by the relentless Allied attacks since the landings on June 6, 1944, Adolf Hitler was desperate to restore the strategic situation in Normandy. On August 8, the Germans launched Operation Luttich with the intention of driving into the flank of American troops as they advanced across the Cotentin Peninsula. Their aim was to stop the Allied advance across France in its tracks. On that day, all that blocked the Germans was the U.S. 30th Infantry Division in and around the town of Mortain. Our first visit will include several key stops where we can discuss the epic stand made by the 30th Infantry and other units as they halted Adolf Hitler’s last desperate attempt to regain the initiative in Normandy. Among the battlefields are Grimesnil Road and Le Lande des Morts (the land of the dead), St. Barthelemy, where three companies of the 117th Infantry faced the might of the German Panzer attack, the bridge at the Abbaye Blanche and Point 317 to visit the site of the 120th Infantry Regiment’s epic five-day stand. Their stubborn heroics saved the Allied advance and set the stage for the final battles in and around Chambois. After lunch, we push on to the Brittany American Cemetery to pay our respects to the 4,410 Americans buried there.
Day 10-Final Victory at Falaise
The final battles of the Normandy Campaign highlight this day. We follow the route of Patton’s 3rd Army and the Canadians from 21st Army Group as they fought to close the German’s last escape route from Normandy. Stops will include the Canadian battlefield at May-sur-Orne, Panzer Ace Michael Wittman’s final battlefield, St. Lambert-sur-Dives and the site where Major Currie earned the Victoria Cross. Then it is on to Moissey Ford and the “Corridor of Death.” We will then follow the 2nd Polish Armored Division into its positions along the “Mace.” The Poles were preparing to seal off the final escape route out of the Normandy cauldron for the remnants of German armored and infantry formations that had been fighting since June 6. We will make several stops around the Mace to study the epic armored battles between the Poles and the Germans.

Our examination of the Normandy Campaign will end at Chambois. We will visit the American sector of the campaign’s final battle before moving into Chambois itself to see where the Allied armies finally linked up and ended the Normandy Campaign once and for all. On our way back to Paris we will make one final stop: a small stretch of road outside Vimontiers where Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was wounded by Allied fighter planes.

Day 11-Departure
Morning transfer to CDG - Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

The Beaches and Beyond:
The Normandy Campaign from the Landings to the Liberation of Paris

For dates and prices, visit our website: www.stephenambrosetours.com or call 504-821-9283

Tour Includes:
- Travel by private motorcoach
- Professional historian with you throughout the tour lecturing and answering questions
- Hotels: 3- and 4-star accommodations
- Daily breakfasts, some lunches, most dinners
- Entrance fees to all museums, sites and parks
- Flights NOT included
OPTIONAL PRE-TOUR EXTENSION:

**CHURCHILL’S LONDON**

**Day 1 - Overnight flight to London**
Guests travel independently to London on an overnight flight with arrival on May 30.

**Day 2 - London**
Arrive this morning in London and make your way to the tour hotel in the neighborhood of Kensington.

Following a mid-afternoon meet-and-greet gathering we will proceed the Cabinet War Rooms, Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s top-secret underground command center. It was from here, safe from the German bombs pounding London, that Churchill directed Britain’s war effort. We cap off our informative visit with a lecture by Phil Reed, former director of the Churchill War Rooms and an expert on Churchill.

After Blenheim, we travel to Bletchley Park, the top-secret wartime codebreaking center that the prime minister called the, “goose that laid the golden egg and never cackled.” It was here that mathematical geniuses such as Alan Turing and others worked in tireless anonymity to decipher Germany’s secret codes and lay the groundwork for modern computers. We will see the restored war-time facilities as well as the famous bomb machine, which enabled the efficient breaking of German codes. We will discuss Churchill’s realization of the importance of the codebreakers and his crucial role in keeping Bletchley operating despite opposition.

**Day 3 - London**
We begin our day at the magnificent Blenheim Palace, residence of the Duke of Marlborough and birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill in 1874. The palace opened in 1722 as a gift from the British people to Churchill’s illustrious ancestor, John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, in honor of his great victory over the French at the 1704 Battle of Blenheim.
Day 4 - London
We will spend the morning exploring Churchill’s London, seeing some of the sites that were so important in his daily life. We stop at JJ Fox, where the prime minister obtained his favorite Cuban cigars and St. Margaret’s chapel, where Churchill married Clementine Hozier and other sites associated with his life. After lunch at Claridge’s, one of the prime minister’s favorite eateries, we will travel to the Battle of Britain Museum.

In addition to the restored aircraft and displays, at the museum we will see the “Ops Room,” the command center for British defenses during the Battle of Britain. It was from here that Churchill oversaw operations during the final climactic air battles over Britain in September 1940.

Day 5 - Portsmouth
We leave London for Kent and what one historian called, “the most important country house in Europe” The house, Chartwell, home to Winston Churchill for 40 years. From Chartwell the future prime minister warned about Britain’s lack of preparedness to face the threat of Nazi Germany. He also would come here to escape the pressures of his office and convene his “little cabinet.” Our private tour will include access to sites normally inaccessible to visitors. We then continue south to Portsmouth, the home of the Royal Navy.

Here we will spend time at the Historic Naval Dockyards museum, and see Admiral Nelson’s flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar as well as an original copy of the Overlord plan at the Royal Navy Museum.

Day 6 - Normandy
Following breakfast, we will board the cross-channel ferry and embark for Normandy as the troops did in 1944. In the afternoon, we meet up with guests taking the tour only, who arrived from Paris. Upon landing we will begin to see Churchill’s genius as a planner and leader in action. From the beaches to the heroic Allied drive inland against stiff German resistance, we will witness the courage that began the liberation of western Europe from Nazi occupation.

Tour Includes:
• Travel by private motorcoach
• Professional historian with you throughout the tour lecturing and answering questions
• Hotels: 3- and 4-star accommodations
• Daily breakfasts, some lunches, most dinners
• Entrance fees to all museums, sites and parks
• Flights NOT included

For dates and prices, visit our website: www.stephenambrosetours.com or call 504-821-9283

Optional pre-tour
CHURCHILL’S LONDON