



See distribution

13 JUNE 2023

KOSB ASSOCIATION BATTLEFIELD TOUR - D DAY 80

MON 20 – FRI 24 MAY 2024

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Borderers - greetings,

INTRODUCTION

1. June 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings and the beginning of the Normandy campaign, in which 1 and 6 KOSB fought, taking heavy casualties, especially in the break out battles around Caen.

PROPOSAL

2. It is proposed that the Association conduct a 5 day Battlefield Tour to mark the 80th anniversary of the KOSB actions during the Battle for Normandy. 1 KOSB landed on Queen / Red beach (part of SWORD) on D day itself, taking low casualties that day. 6 KOSB landed later, unopposed, on D + 9.

However, 225 KOSB's were KIA in the Normandy Campaign, from both battalions, most of them in the breakout battles around Caen in Ops Epsom, Goodwood and Bluecoat. It is not planned to conduct the tour on the exact anniversary of the battle, as Normandy will be hosting thousands of visitors during that period, restricting freedom of movement, and access to sites of interest and accommodation options. Late May offers the best window of opportunity. It is proposed that the tour is 5 days long, comprising 2 travel days and 3 full days on the ground - 20 – 24 May 2024. A three man recce in Normandy was carried out by the authors in late May just past, and we have come up with what we believe will be a superb and very moving tour proposal.

METHODOLOGY

3. **WHERE?** The tour will focus on 1 and 6 KOSB's actions in Normandy, France, covering the pre-battle history and preparation of the battalions, the beach landings, the fighting in and around Caen, and the subsequent break out battles in Normandy. The tour will place 1 and 6 KOSB's actions within the wider context of the Battle for Normandy, and some generic sites - non KOSB specific - will also be visited, including Pegasus Bridge and the iconic American Omaha beach.

There are many superb Museums in the Normandy area, and we will cherry pick 2/3 of the best to visit. There are also numerous, immaculate CWGC cemeteries, and we will visit 3 of those where Borderers lie, and tell some of their stories. The tour will conclude with an Act of Remembrance at the very beautiful, quite small, St Charles De Percy CWGC Cemetery, SW of Caen.

5. **HOW?** We aim to conduct the tour as a series of visits to key locations. Time for discussion, exploration and personal reflection will be built into each location. The tour will also use the extensive and fascinating archive material held at Berwick upon Tweed. A recommended reading list will be issued to assist those wishing to 'bone up' beforehand. As a starter, see the excellent Cooper articles from the 2020 Borderers' Chronicle (BC), p 97 and the 2022 BC, p 80.

John Cooper and Gerry O'Neill will act as the lead deliverers during the tour. Andy M will guide the cemeteries part. Major Kalim Rehman- who came on the Arnhem tour- a Reservist with 6 RIFLES, and an ex Regular Para- will give the Pegasus Bridge brief, and others. He is leading a 6 RIFLES multi ranks tour this coming July.

6. **WHO?** The intention is to recruit a good spread of the Association, up to a top limit of 35. If we are heavily overbid, a ballot for places will be conducted independently by HHQ, allocating proportionately to Branches, to give a good geographical mix. We would be happy to run a reserve list. Borderer CO 2 SCOTS- Lt Col John Dunn- has agreed to send a party of 4 all ranks, led by his IO- Capt Seumas O'Duffin - as they did for the Arnhem 75 tour.

ITINERARY

7. An outline itinerary of the tour is at Annex A. We aim to get the mix right - blending the requirement to understand the role of the Regiment's two Battalions, and walk where they fought and fell, but also provide

opportunities for commemoration, to grasp Op Overlord and the Normandy battles as a whole. This will be a concentrated few days, with overnight ferry crossings each end, but fascinating, moving and powerful at the same time.

ADMINISTRATION

COSTS. Normandy rates have pretty much doubled since Covid, as the hotels know there is big demand- especially the months around the 80th anniversary of the landings next year, which has pushed up prices.

Using a UK coach and basing ourselves at the Novotel, Bayeux we are looking at the following, supplied by Anglia Travel, who we have used three times before –a very efficient travel company, who specialise in military tours admin:

- £819 per person based on 30- 35 full paying passengers, sharing twin rooms for a 5-day Normandy tour - travelling 20-24 May 2024.

Costs would be higher if we do not achieve the minimum number of 30. This includes:

UK coach, picking up and dropping off at Portsmouth Harbour Railway station.

Return Channel crossings, with cabins.

2 nights' bed and breakfast Novotel Hotel accommodation, in twin rooms, in Bayeux, Normandy. Singles will incur a supplement and are subject to availability.

A breakfast on the ferry on day 2. A packed lunch and evening meal on day 2 and day 3. A packed lunch day 4. Breakfast on the ferry on day 5.

Entrance fees to the Arromanches and Bayeux Museums.

Insurance specifically designed for groups.

24-hour emergency response cover whilst on tour.

We know this is a lot to find, but everywhere costs have gone up hugely, so this does represent very good value we believe, and we have worked hard at keeping it as low as possible. We will be happy to stage payments as we have done before.

Getting to Portsmouth will be separate to this, and down to individual plans. We are grateful to Euan Scroggie, who has once again kindly agreed to be

tour finance coordinator, allowing finances to be run through the Edinburgh Branch account.

TRAVEL. We are looking at taking the Brittany Ferries overnight ferry from Portsmouth to Caen (ie replicating the X channel journey of our forefathers) on the evening of Day 1, then move around by coach, with a Tac HQ type car in country for any trouble shooting. Step one would be get yourself to Portsmouth for early evening. Return on the evening/ overnight ferry of Thursday, back home Friday – allowing 3 full days of battle touring on the beautiful, and in parts very different, ground of Normandy. Days 3 and 4 will be very much off the beaten track, and include generous hosting by two French communities, who are still enormously grateful to us nearly 80 years on.

Individuals will be responsible for making suitable health and travel insurance arrangements. No financial support can be offered by the Association.

8. **Accommodation.** The very popular and charming Bayeux- of Cathedral / Tapestry and touring centre fame- is the base we have picked for our tour, staying in a Novotel just outside the centre. Bayeux was hardly touched – the Allies captured it on Day 1, unlike Caen which was flattened. On the recce, we did not warm to Caen as a base- very busy traffic, and soulless hotel areas.

9. **WHAT DO I DO NEXT?** An Initial Expression of Interest Proforma is attached at Annex B. Addressees are requested to indicate their interest and individual requirements. Please copy the page as a new document, name it ***DD80 Initial Expression – JOCK LARGEPACK (yr name) and*** send it to either **andymid@btinternet.com** OR **museum@kosb.co.uk** no later than 30 August 2023, when bids will close.

Your early expression of interest is only that at this stage, not a seat on the bus yet! Gerry O’N will keep the master list of bids and places. We will announce in early autumn what the response was, and who the party will consist of, with a reserve list if necessary. Then, once the numbers are more certain, and names decided, a committal of a deposit will be taken, in early 2024. Do pass this to any friends you think might like to go. In the event that the tour attracts a strong level of interest, over our limit, an impartial ballot system will be used. The maximum party size will be 35.

10. **Access Issues.** Please note that some of the tour will involve walking on uneven, rough ground, and there will be a lot of on and off the bus, so those with poor/ reduced mobility would maybe find this tour too much.

XXV – OABAAB

JOHN COOPER/ ANDY MIDDLEMISS / GERRY O’NEILL

ANNEXES

A. TOUR ITINERARY

B: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROFORMA.

Distribution:

HHQ for Association Branches/ KOSB website

Previous Tour Attendees

Keith Montgomery – RE- Piper

Capt S O’Duffin- 2 SCOTS

ANNEX A

DAY 1 – MONDAY 20 MAY 2024

Party RV Portsmouth early evening

2245 – Overnight Ferry- Portsmouth to Ouistreham / Caen

DAY 2 – TUESDAY 21 MAY – BEACHES DAY

Pegasus Bridge

Sword Beach -1KOSB

Vers Sur Mer- British Memorial

Arromanches Museum

Omaha Beach (US forces) visitor centre and US cemetery

Bayeux CWGC Cemetery –KOSB stories- and museum.

Novotel ,Bayeux

Dinner in hotel

DAY 3 – WEDNESDAY 22 MAY - OPs GOODWOOD AND EPSOM

Banneville- La-Campagne- CWGC. East of Caen – Op Goodwood- 1KOSB

Op Epsom – West of Caen – 6 KOSB

15 (Sc) Div Monument.

Belval Chateau near Grainville sur Odon- lunch hosted by Mme Bellaux-Pinchon

Drive to Pt 112.

Evrecy- Pt 113 – war walk

Tour Dinner –“sangs and clatter” – Novotel, Bayeux .

DAY 4 – THURSDAY 23 MAY - LIBERATION OF ESTRY

Op Bluecoat- Les Martin Des Besaces- Musee 44- La Percee De Bocage

War walk- La Ferriere de Doyen

War walk to Estry – March into “Place de KOSB”- liberated by 6 KOSB – wreath laying ceremony and “Vin D’Honneur” reception by M. Le Maire and village community

Tour Remembrance service in CWGC St Charles de Percy cemetery

Free time in Bayeux- own supper arrangements

O' night ferry to Portsmouth via ROTS Hypermarche for Resupplies .

DAY 5 – FRIDAY 24 MAY

Return Home

Guest talks will be held during the tour:

The Medical Services
Use and types of Artillery
Captain Elliot MC
Comms and Signals
Sappers on the beaches and Normandy
CWGC
Logistics
Inf Weapons
Intelligence

D DAY 80 KOSB TOUR-20-24 MAY 2024
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

NAME (S):

E MAIL:

HOME ADDRESS :

TEL :

ACCOMMODATION : Add yes to your choice – (NB- sgl. occupancy attracts quite hefty supplements)

a. **FERRY-**
SGL CABIN:
SHARED CABIN- MAX 2:

b. **HOTEL**
SGL ROOM
SHARED TWIN ROOM
DOUBLE ROOM

b. **Any diet needs or any major medical conditions we should be aware of ?**

ANY SPECIAL REASON for joining the tour?
eg relative who served in KOSB in Normandy etc :