

Face to Face with History...

June 2 At London's Heathrow Airport, I greeted a group of 96 students, teachers and community members from Provo, Utah representing the Timpview Marching Band. They prepared for this tour for over a year. In addition to rehearsals, they took history classes, watched films, and attended meetings with war veterans. By the time they arrived in London for their 10-day tour of England and France, they had a thorough historical understanding of the invasion and its significance. The time came to bring history to life.

June 3 In London, we visited the Cabinet War Rooms, HMS Belfast and Imperial War Museum. On a sunny afternoon, the band performed at London's Victoria Embankment Stage for an audience that included veterans from various countries.



"The trip far exceeded our hopes and expectations. It was a life-changing experience for all of us. We came away wanting to share it with others."

Dave Fullmer,
Director, Timpview Normandy Marching Band

June 4 We traveled next to Portsmouth and spent an evening at a British Legion Club. After performing for British veterans, band members talked with them over dinner. As we said farewells, a teary woman told us, "My father came home from the war 60 years ago and has never spoken of his experiences. Tonight he opened up to these young people and talked for the first time about what happened to him during the war. This means so much to my family, and we cannot thank you enough".

June 5 The emotion of the tour continued to build as we boarded a ferry to cross the same channel as troops had crossed to France 60 years ago.

June 6 The Anniversary of D-Day arrived! We left our hotel bright and early with credentials that allowed us to visit all three official ceremonies. President Bush and President Chirac spoke at the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach. Several of our students had the thrill to shake hands with the two presidents. From here we raced to Pointe du Hoc for the next ceremony, after which a two-star U.S. Army General invited us to perform. The final ceremony began at 5:00 p.m. at Utah Beach. We arrived back at our hotel at 11:00pm. This was certainly our longest day but one that we will never forget.



June 7 After touring the D-Day museum at Arromanches, we returned to Utah Beach, stood on the sand and performed a patriotic tribute. The band marched to the Utah Memorial where several hundred American soldiers listened to our concert. After we laid a wreath at the monument, the soldiers ceremonially escorted us to our coaches. We thought the day could not be more perfect until the soldiers formed two military lines and saluted the students, as if to say thank you, as we drove away.

June 8 On our last day in Normandy, we returned to Omaha Beach for an unforgettable lesson. Ford White, a history teacher with the group, told the story of a battalion of soldiers that landed the morning of June 6, 1944. We learned that within a very short time of landing the majority of the soldiers were killed and only a few ever made it ashore.



At the end of the day, we marched single file through the cemetery to lay a wreath on the grave of SSgt. Carl Yarrington, a soldier from the state of Utah who died on June 6, 1944. This was a fitting end to our visit to Normandy, paying tribute to a soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice. The students had given their time and talents to commemorate a day which would never be forgotten, and created unforgettable memories for themselves along the way.



"I am going to try my best to earn what those young men fought and died for me to enjoy. I wouldn't have these feelings without this trip. It will forever be in my memory."

Student,
Timpview Normandy Marching Band



Photos: Timpview Normandy Marching Band, Provo, Utah
60th Anniversary D-Day Salute Tour of Normandy
Photos by Richard W. Harris

