

Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours presents

THE GHOST ARMY

SECRET WAR TOUR | JULY 9 - 22, 2015

This tour follows the story of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, the extraordinary deception soldiers better known as The Ghost Army. It also includes many other World War II sites to offer a wider context for the story of the deceivers. The tour is led by historian, filmmaker and author Rick Beyer, who made *The Ghost Army* documentary, and is the co-author of the forthcoming book *The Ghost Army of World War II*.

Day 1 – Thursday, July 9
– Flight to London

Day 2 – Friday, July 10
– London

Check into the hotel where the entire group gathers for an evening welcome reception. Rick Beyer treats us to our first lecture, with introductions all around. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 3 – Saturday, July 11
– London, Bletchley Park, Walton Hall

The morning features key sites in London that figured prominently in the war. We then depart London for Bletchley Park, the nerve center for Allied code-breaking and the operation code named Ultra. Here we find the Enigma machine and the complex where Alan Turing and others decrypted Axis codes and cyphers. This is the story depicted in the Benedict Cumberbatch film *The Imitation Game*. That night we settle at Walton Hall and view the Ghost Army documentary film.



Day 4 – Sunday, July 12
– Walton Hall

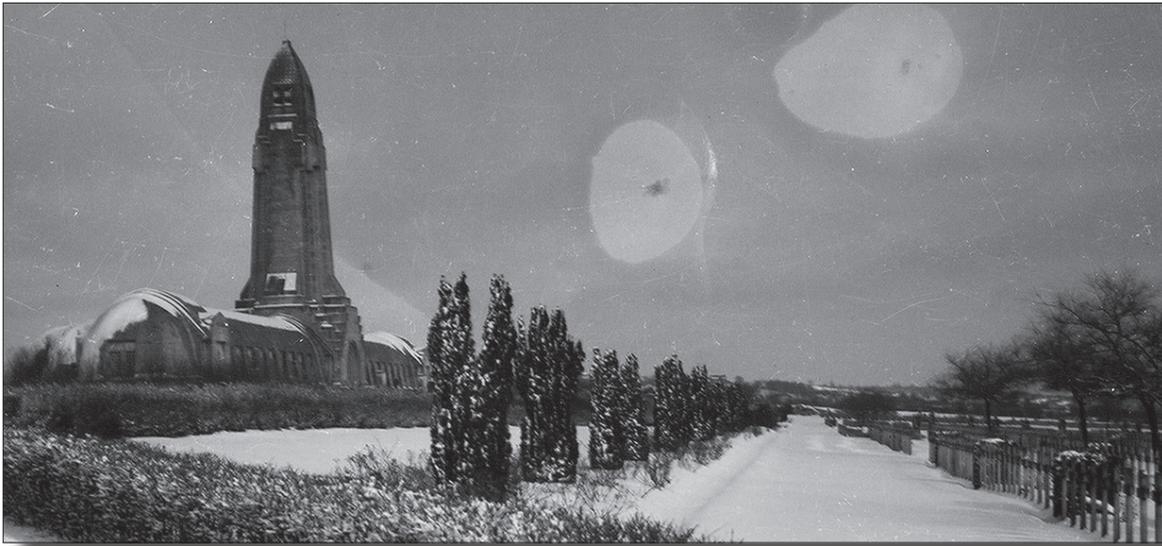
Today is Deception School at Walton Hall, the 19th Century manor house located a few miles outside of Stratford-Upon-Avon. The Ghost Army bivouacked here from April to June 1944, as they trained for their mission. We inflate the artificial tank, practice with camouflage and mount our own sonic and radio deception. A local re-enactment group demonstrates Ghost Army exercises. That evening we visit nearby Leamington Spa, where the soldiers went to blow off steam.



Day 5 – Monday, July 13
– Crossing the Channel

This morning we drive to Portsmouth and tour Southwick House, the advance command post of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. In the months leading up to D-Day in 1944, the house was the headquarters of the main Allied commanders, including Allied Supreme Commander General Eisenhower, Naval Commander-in-Chief Admiral Ramsay, and the Army Commander-in-Chief General Montgomery. It was here

that Ike faced the agonizing “go/no-go” decision in the face of terrible weather just before D-Day.



After dinner we board the cross Channel ferry and make our way to Normandy in an overnight crossing, just as so many American soldiers did in 1944. (Our accommodations will be better than theirs!)

Day 6 – Tuesday, July 14 – Normandy

After an early morning arrival in Normandy, we proceed to Pegasus Bridge where the first shots were fired on D-Day. Here the British Sixth Airborne led by Major John Howard made a miraculous glider landing to carry out a surprise attack that took this crucial bridge across the Caen Canal.

We then drive to Ste-Mere-Eglise, one of the villages where the American Airborne descended on D-Day. Here we view and explore the iconic church where John Steele and his landing on the steeple are memorialized.

From there we visit Utah Beach itself, where much of The Ghost Army landed a few weeks after D-Day, and the Invasion Museum that depicts the D-Day fighting there.

Day 7 – Wednesday, July 15 – Normandy

We start the day in the village of Trévières, the Ghost Army's initial base in Normandy. We visit the church in the town square that many of the men painted and sketched.

From there we travel to the historic Norman city of Bayeux, where we view the Bayeux Tapestry that depicts William the Conqueror's invasion of England (The last successful cross-channel invasion before 1944.) There will also be time to see the cathedral there.

After lunch, we visit the German fortifications at Longues-Sur-Mer. Then we head to Omaha Beach where American GI's faced the strongest German resistance on D-Day and incurred the greatest losses. Here too, several contingents of Ghost Army soldiers began their European operations. We walk the beach and pay our respects at the American Cemetery with its 9,387 American soldiers' graves stretching along the top of the bluff overlooking the beach.

After dinner, Rick Beyer will present the story of The Ghost Army's operations in Normandy and Brittany.

Day 8 – Thursday, July 16 – Paris

En route to Paris we stop at Château de La Roche-Guyon, the 14th century fortress that was the D-Day Headquarters of famed German General Erwin Rommel. We arrive in Paris by late afternoon.

Day 9 – Friday, July 17 – Paris

After breakfast, we offer an optional bus tour of key historic sites in Paris. The afternoon is free. The Allies, preceded by Free French troops, symbolically reclaimed the French capital from the Nazis in August 1944. Ghost Army troops arrived there a few days after liberation, and you may explore the city on your own as they did.

Day 10 – Saturday, July 18 – Reims-Verdun-Luxembourg

- As our bus heads east out of Paris, Rick Beyer will give a presentation about the Ghost Army's journey to eastern France and eventually Luxembourg.

We stop in Reims to visit the Museum of the Surrender, where German generals surrendered to General Eisenhower in May 1945. Admire the famous cathedral where many French kings were crowned, including the July 17, 1429 coronation of Charles VII, guided by Joan of Arc.

On the way to Luxembourg is Verdun, site of the biggest battle of World War One. During the Battle of the Bulge, The Ghost Army withdrew to this French town, and camped in the World War One fortifications. We will see the spot where they bunked, and briefly tour the battlefield and cemetery.

Day 11 – Sunday, July 19 – Luxembourg

From mid-September until the Battle of the Bulge in December, The Ghost Army was based in Luxembourg City. In the morning we take a walking tour of the Grund, the picturesque quarter painted and sketched by many Ghost Army artists.

Then we visit the Seminary where many of the soldiers stayed (and Marlene Dietrich performed for them). It is now part of the University of Luxembourg.

After lunch, it is a short ride to nearby Hamm and the American cemetery. We visit the grave of General George Patton – as well as that of Sgt. George Peddle, a Ghost Army soldier killed in action. Nearby is a German military cemetery that provides a study in contrasts.

From there we trace an important Ghost Army deception, Operation Bettembourg, to better grasp how it played out.

Day 12 – Monday, July 20 – Luxembourg
 We drive to Bastogne, where the 101st Airborne and elements of the 10th Armored held off 15 German divisions for six days in the Battle of the Bulge. We'll explore General McAuliffe's HQ where he replied to German surrender demands with one word: "NUTS." At the 101st Airborne Museum in Bastogne we experience what the battle was like for both soldier and civilian. And we learn about a little known Ghost Army operation designed to help General Patton's drive on Bastogne. We return to Luxembourg City for dinner.

Day 13 – Tuesday, July 21 – Siegfried Line-Trier-Frankfurt
 We drive to the Siegfried Line to see remnants of the German communication trenches, pillboxes and dragon's teeth that American GI's fought so hard to take in late 1944.

Then we visit Trier, where The Ghost Army spent the final days of the war guarding Displaced Persons camps, and where many of the artists captured scenes of the bombed out city. Our visit will include free time for shopping and exploring the oldest city in Germany.

That night in Frankfurt say farewell over dinner and discussion after an enriching campaign into history.

Day 14 – Wednesday, July 22 – Home
 Early morning airport transfer to Frankfurt International.

Historian

Rick Beyer is an award-winning filmmaker, best-selling author, and long-time history enthusiast. He has spent a decade researching The Ghost Army, and made films for PBS, History, National Geographic, and the Smithsonian. Rick is also the author of the popular *Greatest Stories Never Told* series of history books. He lives in Lexington, MA.



2015 TOUR GHOST ARMY

**\$4,795 per person based on double occupancy.
 \$895 single supplement
 \$300 deposit required for this tour**

- Full-time historian
- Breakfast daily / 8 Dinners
- First class accommodations
- Rooms with private bath or shower, hotel taxes, portorage and service charges
- Touring by private first class air-conditioned motorcoach
- Channel crossing to Normandy via ferry
- All entrance fees to museums and attractions
- Airfare is not included.

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