

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Military tour offers 'insiders' view of Canadian battles of France

Rare opportunity to visit battlefields with noted military historians offered only once before

For Immediate Release

June 13, 2000

59-00

Contact: Terry Copp
Co-director, Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3309

or Michael Strickland
Manager, Media Relations & Information
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070

WATERLOO – War veterans and members of the general public are being offered a rare opportunity to tour the battlefields of Normandy and learn about Canada's role in the liberation of France under the guidance of leading military historians.

In association with the Canadian Battle of Normandy Foundation, professors from Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo will lead a 16-day study tour of Canadian battlefields in France. Normally reserved for university students and academics, the tour provides a unique and enjoyable learning experience by putting participants in touch with informative guides and on-site experience. This is only the second time such a tour has been available to the general public.

"Living in France and walking the battlefields really provides people with a rare opportunity to learn about the war," says Terry Copp, author of more than 10 books on the Canadian role in the liberation of Europe and co-director of the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies. "Veterans get to relive and reflect on their wartime experiences, friends and family can pay tribute to their loved ones who fought and younger people can put the war into a more realistic perspective."

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Led by Copp and Geoff Hayes, a military historian at the University of Waterloo, tour participants survey World War One battlefields at the Somme and Vimy Ridge, visit Dieppe, explore the D-Day beaches and take part in a series of historical Tactical Exercises Without Troops. These exercises make use of original air photographs and maps and give participants the chance to rethink the battles of 1944 from an up-close perspective.

"All the tour arrangements were excellent," said Ian Inrig, an Ottawa resident who joined the first tour in 1999. "I learned more than I could have imagined. My wife particularly appreciated the flexibility and alternate arrangements."

Copp is one of the leading Canadian academics on the Battle of Normandy and has organized and led three previous study tours for university students selected by the Canadian Battle of Normandy Foundation. Also leading the tour are Hayes, the author of *The Lincs: The Lincoln and Welland Regiment at War*, Lieutenant-Colonel David Patterson who has attended four previous Normandy tours, *Canadian Military History* managing editor Michael Bechthold, and University of New Brunswick doctoral student Lee Windsor.

Held from October 4 to 21, the tour costs \$3100 including airfare and accommodations. For more information or to register, visit www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~ghayes/Normandy.html or contact Terry Copp at (519) 884-0710 extension 3309. Limited to 23 participants, spaces are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.