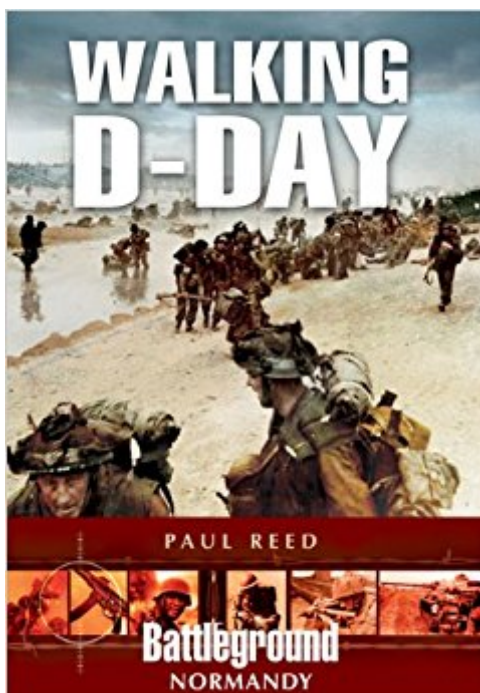


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# Walking D-Day (Battleground Normandy)



## Synopsis

Paul Reed's latest battlefield walking guide covers the site of the largest amphibious invasion of all time, the first step in the Allied liberation of France and the rest of northwest Europe. The places associated with the landings on the Normandy coast on 6 June 1944 are among the most memorable that a battlefield visitor can explore. They give a fascinating insight into the scale and complexity of the Allied undertaking and the extent of the German defenses and into the critical episodes in the fighting that determined whether the Allies would gain a foothold or be thrown back into the sea. All the most important sites are featured, from Pegasus Bridge, Merville Battery, Ouistrehem and Longues Battery to Juno, Gold, Omaha and Utah Beaches, Pointe du Hoc and Sainte-Mère-Église. There are twelve walks, and each one is prefaced by a historical section describing in vivid detail what happened in each location and what remains to be seen. Information on the many battlefield monuments and the military cemeteries is included, and there are over 120 illustrations. Walking D-Day introduces the visitor not only to the places where the Allies landed and first clashed with the German defenders but to the Normandy landscape over which the critical battles that decided the course of the war were fought.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Paul Reed is a leading military historian, specializing in the two world wars. He has been visiting European battlefields for more than thirty years, and lived on the Somme for over a decade. He has worked as a researcher and battlefield guide, and is the author of several books on the Great War.

He also regularly contributes to television programmes, such as Timewatch, Meet the Ancestors and Who Do You Think You Are? and was historical consultant to BBC1's My Family At War.

Reading this book was as informative as watching a documentary on TV about the D-day landings. Many personal insights about the courage & patriotism of the Allied invasion forces. A fascinating read, each landing beach and key objectives covered in detail, and followed by a 'guided tour' of each specific area. For anyone interested in Operation Overlord, it is a 'must read' companion to other literature on the subject. Additionally, it serves as an accurate tour guide.

Great! Very informative

Used this book when I visited Normandy. A good book to use for planning. Kept it in the car and referred to it daily.

Excellent for a walking tour

Save your money. Walks are unrealistically long.

I am having trouble downloading the book. I have bought other books and downloaded them on my Kindle app, but this one will not load. I cannot find a place to get the support I need.

Given the proliferation of literature on the 1944 invasion of France, presenting new material on the subject is a challenge. This is especially true when one is presenting a Normandy battlefield guidebook. To summarize the vast amount of data in a readable and comprehensive manner is a daunting task. However, author Paul Reed's battlefield walking guide covers the site of the largest amphibious invasion of all time in a manner that allows the reader to visualize the battle area and appreciate the tremendous sacrifices that took place that cold June day. Mr. Reed's writing style is engaging and enhanced by maps, source material, and photographs that present a fascinating view of the Normandy invasion area. An introductory section provides instructions on conducting the walking tour, use of maps, travel to the beachhead area, tourist offices, accommodations, and what to wear while touring the area. There are also a number of websites shown which can be used to enhance one's command of the subject matter. Mr. Reed then divides the battlefield into twelve

areas. Each area contains an historical piece and a detailed walking tour guide. The historical sections detail the objectives for a given area, then highlight unit and individual performances. The walking tour portion contains such useful advice as where to park your vehicle, GPS location, along with the location of monuments and markers. There is also an abbreviation guide with photos of basic weapons systems and tactical vehicles to aid the reader. Reed familiarizes us with the Allied landing beaches and the Normandy countryside. The author details, for example, the training and employment of the British forces that captured the Orne River Bridge and canal system now known as Pegasus Bridge. Insightful comments are also presented on the heroic actions used to silence the powerful Merville artillery battery in the hours before the landings on Sword Beach. Details on the battle to secure the German positions at Ouistrehem by French and Canadian troops are presented in both the historic and walking tour sections of the book. Based largely on experiences derived from the 1942 raid on the port city of Dieppe, D Day planners sought to avoid seizing these stoutly defended areas. The construction and emplacement of the complex Mulberry and Gooseberry artificial harbor systems at Arromanches and off Omaha Beach presents a fascinating insight into the Allies innovative way to sustain the forces ashore. To appreciate the magnitude of this enterprise, Reed highly recommends that a visitor take advantage of the Arromanches museum and view the detailed model of the artificial harbor system. Regardless of how familiar one might be with the Normandy beach area, a trip to Omaha Beach is thought provoking. Given the available number of automatic weapons, the defenders could place over 100,000 rounds of machine gun fire a minute on the landing area. This fire was supplemented by an extensive minefield system, mortar fire and artillery support. How anyone survived let alone triumphed on Omaha Beach, is a tale of valor that the author brings to life. Relying on the post war writing, the author explains the difficulties of the tasks allocated to the men of the 2nd Ranger Battalion at Pointe du Hoc. Their mission was to secure the heights that towered 80 to 100 feet above the landing point, disable the artillery pieces located atop the cliffs then retain the objective area until relieved by troops advancing from Omaha Beach. It was a demanding mission and one that required mental and physical stamina to accomplish. As they advanced across the area, they quickly discovered that the artillery pieces in question had been moved. Following the walking tour directions, one can understand the initiative and focus of the attacking forces as they found the weapons and disabled their use. This was an outstanding act of courage and dedication amply addressed by Mr. Reed's commentary. Of course, no tour of the Normandy beachhead area would be complete without addressing the actions of the two American and one British airborne divisions in the early hours of D-Day. The planning, execution and employment of these highly trained divisions is given ample coverage in the historic

summary and walking tour instructions for each of the airborne drop zones. Mr. Reed concludes his work with an overview of the Normandy military cemeteries. There is no more fitting closure to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This is a highly recommended, well-written book that will appeal to a wide audience.

An interesting blend of tour guide and the history of D-Day. In creating a one-stop book for all, the author has made a very informative book, but one that is a tad too heavy to be lugging around on the beaches or touring. The tour sizes/lengths are long for anyone of age or not in excellent shape. Having walked this terrain in my youth, I'd suggest taking a bus tour I walk two miles per day and now middle aged - going 5 or 10 miles, sightseeing, getting in/out of vehicles is exhausting, not realistic for most. I can see this being an excellent book to read in the hotel before going out, leaving on the tour bus/car while viewing the many places shown here but I'd prefer a map or brochure if hiking out & about. The history told here is 1st rate - great blend of unit history, individual stories, weapons used by both sides. Photos, while black & white are helpful. Maps are good. . Let the professionals do the driving & parking while you sit in the AC and read this.

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