



# Musée Mémorial Bataille de Normandie

Press kit 2022

## The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy

The Battle of Normandy

History explained through objects

*Liberty Alley*, a site for remembrance in Bayeux

Visits to the museum

News and calendar of events

Key figures



[www.bayeuxmuseum.com](http://www.bayeuxmuseum.com)

Press contact : Fanny Garbe, Media Relations Officer  
Tel. +33 (0)2.31.51.20.49 - [fgarbe@mairie-bayeux.fr](mailto:fgarbe@mairie-bayeux.fr)



## Musée Mémorial Bataille de Normandie



## The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy

Situated near the British Military Cemetery of Bayeux, the Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy narrates the battles which took place in Normandy after the D-Day landings, between 7<sup>th</sup> June and 29<sup>th</sup> August 1944. The museum offers an exhibition surface of 2000m<sup>2</sup>, entirely refurbished in 2006. The collections of military equipment, the diorama and the archival films allow the visitor to grasp the enormous effort made during this decisive battle in order to restore peace in Europe.

A presentation of the overall situation in Europe before D-Day precedes the rooms devoted to the operations of the month of June 1944: the visit of General De Gaulle in Bayeux on 14<sup>th</sup> June, the role of the Resistance, the Mulberry Harbours and the capture of Cherbourg. Visitors can then step into an exhibition hall based on the work of war reporters – a theme favoured by the City of Bayeux which organises each year the Prix Bayeux-Calvados for War Correspondents.

Visitors will also find information on the lives of civilians living amongst the fighting in the summer of 1944 and details of the towns destroyed by the bombings. There is also a presentation on the role of the military engineers and an impressive display of military vehicles. The visit to the museum ends with a description of the numerous military cemeteries present in the region.

The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy in Bayeux is an educational and didactic museum whose dual purpose is to help visitors understand the conflict and pass on the History of Battle of Normandy. Situated close to the landing beaches, it is an essential introduction to the conflict before visiting the iconic D-Day sites such as Arromanches, Omaha Beach, and the Pointe du Hoc...

## The Battle of Normandy



### General de Gaulle in Bayeux

On 14<sup>th</sup> June 1944, the destroyer "La Combattante" approached the coast of Normandy. Aboard was General De Gaulle. His visit and his speech in Bayeux on that day were of capital importance. He laid the groundwork for a temporary government responsible for restoring Republican law in Free France. Bayeux became the French administrative capital city until the liberation of Paris on 25<sup>th</sup> August.

*[Inside the museum, a room is dedicated to De Gaulle.]*



By the end of the day on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, several bridgeheads had been established by the Allies on the coast of Normandy. On the whole, the Landing operations had been a success and the Battle of Normandy could begin. On 7<sup>th</sup> June, the British troops who had landed in the area of Gold Beach at Arromanches, liberated Bayeux. The city had been miraculously spared; the Germans had quickly left and Bayeux did not suffer from bombing.

### The summer of 1944 in Normandy

For the Americans, who had landed on Omaha and Utah Beach, the capture of Cherbourg - the only deep-water port in the area - was their primary objective. They needed to progress north and isolate the Cotentin Peninsula in order to transport the men, equipment and vehicles needed to continue the battle. On the British side, an artificial harbour was constructed in record time at Arromanches, allowing the supply of troops before the capture of Cherbourg. Their objective was to take the town of Caen from the 21st Panzer Division.

Various battles and operations were conducted in July and August by the Allies on Norman soil: Operation Cobra (the breakthrough to Brittany), and the Battle of the Falaise pocket, where German troops surrendered ... the Battle of Normandy ended when the Allies liberated Paris on 25<sup>th</sup> August and crossed the river Seine to reach the region of Rouen on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

### Military Engineering or the logistics of a victory

One of the museum's special features is the last exhibition room which pays tribute to the engineering units and their prowess in terms of civil and military constructions. Besides the ingenious artificial harbours and the Bailey bridges, the engineers designed the first by-pass, also called the "Bayeux merry go round", which changed the face of the city. This allowed heavy vehicles to avoid the narrow streets of the medieval city and made the transportation of supplies and men to the front much easier.

## History explained through objects



### Summer 44: Bayeux, a hospital town

The Museum of the Battle of Normandy pays an important tribute to civilian victims. Because the city was spared during the fighting of June 1944, Bayeux, with the only operational hospital on liberated territory, soon became a refuge for wounded soldiers and civilians fleeing the conflict. With the help of field hospitals set up in the schools and in the seminary (today's Museum of the Bayeux Tapestry), the general hospital cared for some 2000 people between the middle of June and September 1944.

The courtyard of the Museum of the Bayeux Tapestry (turned into a field hospital in June 1944)

©Imperial War Museum



The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy is the only museum in the area entirely dedicated to the Battle of Normandy (7<sup>th</sup> June - 29<sup>th</sup> August 1944). Visitors can discover the key stages of the conflict, and the day by day progression of the troops. In the museum, objects have an illustrative purpose. The artefacts on display have been carefully chosen to best represent equipment used by the different belligerents during the Battle. The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy seeks to address the widest possible audience.



### The museum's 5 most emblematic objects

- The **Caterpillar D7 Bulldozer** played an essential role in clearing the rubble from the devastated town of Caen. This piece of equipment was also used by the Engineers when building the ring road around Bayeux.
- The **Churchill Crocodile Tank**, as its name suggests, was a British flame-throwing tank, specially developed for the landings in Normandy.
- The outfit of a **deported man** from Bayeux named **Léon PICAND**, evokes the role of the Resistance in the preparation of the landings and the consequences for those involved.
- Medical equipment** (British first aid kit, stretcher and X-ray field unit) evokes Bayeux's key role as a hospital town for thousands of civilians and soldiers during the Battle of Normandy.
- The American **M1 carbine**, the most widely produced weapon during World War II.



## *Liberty Alley, a site for remembrance in Bayeux*



### LES RENCONTRES PRIX BAYEUX-CALVADOS DES CORRESPONDANTS DE GUERRE



### Prix Bayeux - Calvados For War Correspondents

This event celebrates the commitment of men and women reporters, whose role is to reveal to us the war zones of the word. The 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the Prix Bayeux-Calvados for War Correspondents will take place from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October 2022. For a week, international news will be at the heart of many events in Bayeux with new exhibitions, debates, screenings, a book fair and school visits. There will also be many exchanges between the public and the international reporters, witnesses to today's conflicts around the world.

**More info :** [www.prixbayeux.org](http://www.prixbayeux.org)

The notion of liberty is very much anchored in Bayeux with the Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy, the British Military Cemetery, the Memorial for reporters and the Capa roundabout. Along the Fabian Ware Boulevard, these sites all testify of a dearly won freedom and the city's commitment to defend it. This sector of the city has been named *Liberty Alley*.



After the museum, the paved boulevard widens, inviting motorists to slow down and discover on one side the British Military Cemetery and

on the other the pediment of a commemorative monument. The Latin inscription "We, vanquished by William, have freed the homeland of the Conqueror". This reference to the Battle of Hastings refers to the two invasions which took place in the space of several centuries.

The 4648 graves of British soldiers stand opposite a memorial garden created in tribute to war reporters. The garden, unique in France, was inaugurated in 2007, with the contribution of Reporters Without Borders. It lists the names of journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty since 1944. This place further reinforces the identity of Liberty Alley, establishing a link between the fighting of World War 2 and our world today, where liberty seems as fragile as ever. The Memorial for War Reporters is a permanent and concrete extension of the Prix Bayeux-Calvados for War Correspondents which reflects the City's commitment to defend the freedom of the press.



## Visits to the museum



### Useful Information

#### Opening times

The museum is open all year round 7 days a week\*

From 01/05 to 30/09

9:30 am to 6:30 pm

From 01/10 to 30/04

10 am to 12:30 pm 2 pm to 6 pm

*Last visit 45 min before closing*

\*Closed yearly: Christmas, New Year's Day and January

#### 2022 prices

Adults 7,50€ (groups 20 pers. 5,50€)

Children 5€ - Free entry under 10

Combined ticket 2 museums

Adults 12€ (reduced 10,00€)

Combined ticket 3 museums

Adults 15€ (reduced 13,50€)

#### Group reservations

Contact : Aline Levavasseur

Tel : +33 (0)2.31.51.25.58

reservation@bayeuxmuseum.com

#### Boutique / Bookshop

Specialised books, activity books for children, mugs, T-shirts, caps and scarves. Exclusive collection of gifts and souvenirs "I was in Bayeux"

### A chronological layout

With an average length of 1 ½ hours, visits are organised in three sequences (June, July and August 1944). The Battle of Normandy is explained chronologically day by day, month by month. In each room, themed areas on the role of the Resistance, Allied airfields, military engineering and health services offer specific details of the conflict beside an overview of the military operations. Visits are also punctuated by a 25-minute film, presented alternately in French and English.



### The film

#### "Normandy 44, a decisive victory in the West"

The Battle of Normandy, a complex military operation combining air, sea and land forces along a front of a hundred kilometres, and with many offensives is difficult to grasp. The film "Normandy 44, a Decisive Victory in the West" allows the public to understand and monitor the Allies' progression until the final manoeuvre surrounding the 7th German Army on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Composed of unedited archive images (sometimes in colour), the film by Dominique Forget also presents little known images of General de Gaulle in the streets of Bayeux and the distress and suffering of the locals in this battle for freedom.

## News and calendar of events

### Staying in Bayeux

#### Access

Bayeux is situated 260 km from Paris and 30 km from Caen.

By car : A13 et A84

By train : line Paris-Cherbourg, the train station is situated 500 m from the museum.

By air : Caen-Carpiquet Airport 20 km

By ferry : The terminal of Caen-Ouistreham is 30km away

Tourist Office of Bayeux

Pont Saint-Jean - 14400 Bayeux

Tel. +33 (0)2.31.51.28.28

[www.bessin-normandie.com](http://www.bessin-normandie.com)

Calvados Tourisme

8 rue Renoir – 14054 Caen Cedex 4

Tel. +33 (0)2.31.27.90.30

[www.calvados-tourisme.com](http://www.calvados-tourisme.com)

Normandie Tourisme

[www.normandie-tourisme.fr](http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr)

<http://en.normandie-tourisme.fr/things-to-do/sites-and-attractions/d-day-and-the-battle-of-normandy-113-2.html>

### *In May, the Night of Museums*

Every year in May, during this European cultural event, the Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy opens its doors to visitors from 8:00 pm to midnight. Free entry.

### *In June, Anniversary of DDay - Battle of Normandy*

The Normandy D-Day Festival, the festivities which accompany the official ceremonies, takes place every year around 6 June with a programme of events stretching from Utah Beach to Sword Beach. **Find out more.** <http://ddayfestival.com/>

### *In September, Heritage Days*

Created in 1984 by the French Ministry of Culture, Heritage Days take place each year on the third week end of September. The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy takes part in this national event and offers free admission to the museum all day on Saturday and Sunday with the usual opening hours.





## Key figures

### The museum: key dates

Following the success of the temporary exhibition organised by collectors for the visit of President Jimmy Carter in 1978, the city of Bayeux created a museum on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1981. Its theme was the Battle of Normandy.

The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy was entirely redesigned in 2006. The museography and the historical events described in the museum benefited from the expertise of Historian Rémy Desquesnes. Rémy Desquesnes has a PHD in History, on the topic of the Atlantic Wall and is the author of works dealing with different aspects of the Second World War.

In 2007, the municipality inaugurated a Memorial for War Correspondents, situated opposite the Museum of the Battle of Normandy. In 2009, the area which includes the museum, the reporters' garden and the British Military Cemetery was conceptualized and given the name "Liberty Alley".

The Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy is one of the three museums run by the city of Bayeux.

### Number of visitors

In 2019, the Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy welcomed some 110 000 visitors on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of DDay. Individual tourists accounted for 89% of the overall attendance and 11% were groups. 30% of visitors were French tourists and 70% foreign, 30% of which were English speakers. In general the festivities organised to celebrate major anniversaries of the D-Day Landing have a favourable impact on the number of visitors to the Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy.

### Bayeux Museum

Since 2013, the museums of Bayeux have been identified under one trade name: **Bayeux Museum**. The introduction of combined tickets allows visitors to discover 2 or 3 museums at a preferential rate (*see useful information*) :

- **Bayeux Tapestry**
- **Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy**
- **MAHB, Baron Gérard Museum of Art and History**



*Copyrights and reproductions : Bayeux Museum - Ville de Bayeux*