

## YORKSHIRE

One thing I can say with certainty is that there were plenty of Yorkshire Area members in Normandy for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. What I am less certain about is exactly how many or exactly where they all were because, apart from Nick Dunford and crew of Simon King, Anthony Bentham and Jack Bentham, in his two Bedfords, I didn't see anyone else. That said, I did have a chat with a Yorkshire-based couple in an M38A1, at the Pegasus Bridge Museum. This lack of contact wasn't deliberate but merely indicates the area covered by the Battle of Normandy which, in very rough terms, covers 1500+ square miles of the region even if much of the commemorations takes place on the coast and the five beaches associated with the landings.

What also makes it hard to report on Yorkshire members' experiences is that the deadline for this report fell while I was still on the boat home from France so, despite Facebook being awash with Normandy photos, there's not even time to contact members for this issue to hear of their experiences.

My trip started before D-Day and involved driving my Jeep from Yorkshire to Portsmouth for the ferry where I rendezvoused with some friends, then camping at Chateau Martragny for a week, before coming home and driving back north. Over a range of dates, others did variations of the same trip to be at the 80th anniversary events that attracted huge numbers of visitors. One group including Brian Slingsby, Gary Docherty, Simon Roberts and Maxine Watkinson, visited numerous museums and drove their Jeeps

over a surviving section of Mulberry Harbour roadway. Yorkshire stalwart John Gray was part of a group of family and friends doing similar Jeeping stuff.

As it happened much of the worry and moaning on D-Day Facebook pages proved to be unfounded, it's Normandy during the first week in June so, as usual, there were road closures, traffic jams but, in my experience, nothing was insurmountable or severe enough to spoil a trip. To me, as pretty much an uninvolved spectator, I think the MVT CoM, including Yorkshire Area Secretary Brian Slingsby, did a good job with keeping everyone informed about the seemingly ever changing, arrangements for events and regs in France and that many of the moans were about things beyond their control. I'm sure I'm not the only one who remembers D-Day anniversary tours before the advent of social media.

There were also very many high spots, notably the substantial MVT Gathering on the sand at Arromanches. I hadn't booked for this but, having accidentally gate crashed a group's gathering on the sand at Asnelles, we were pleasantly surprised to

see the MVT's entire convoy drive past close enough to photograph almost every vehicle (A couple of those photos are reproduced here). The event was deemed a great success by all who took part including some Yorkshire members. Not being much of a parades and shows guy, I can't report on any of those events although, like many others, I visited the likes of Bayeux and Port-en-Bessin and found them to be buzzing in the sunshine with flags everywhere. The 'Bienvenue à Nos Libérateurs' (Welcome to Our Liberators) flags and banners confounded those who moan that the French have forgotten the huge sacrifices made by allied soldiers in Normandy.

Back in Blighty and looking ahead, summer events are in full swing with things happening every weekend. Of these the biggest will be Yorkshire Wartime Experience in August but there is also to be a vintage vehicle exhibition and 1940s event in Northallerton on Sunday June 30 and the Doncaster Balloon Festival on July 19-20 that includes MVs and classic cars. John Carroll

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