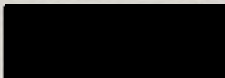


Elon College, NC 27244-2020





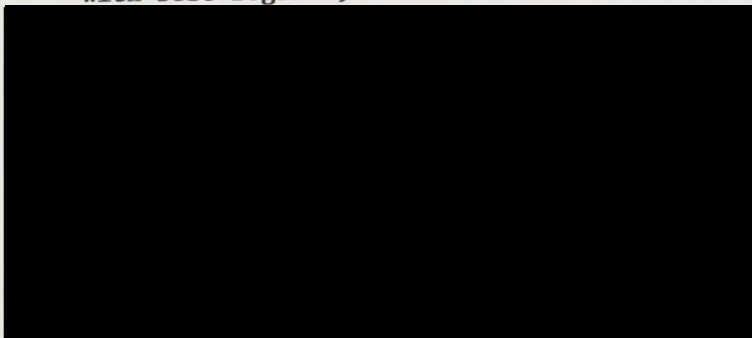
May 9, 1994

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
400 North Capitol Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I want you to know just how much I enjoyed your program "Remembering D-Day: 50 years later." It was a real tribute to those who participated in the Normandy campaign. You and your staff are to be commended for your efforts in putting together such a nice piece, and your recent filming in Normandy was just superb.

With best regards,



Attachments

Students see World War II through the eyes of those who survived

When students in [redacted] winter term course "World War II: A Closer Look" spent three and a half weeks touring Europe, they were given a rare opportunity to understand World War II through the experiences of eyewitnesses and scholars. One of those eyewitnesses was [redacted] who is a survivor of the D-Day invasion.

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER WATERS



Three generations of

[redacted] stand on the shore of Utah Beach where Art landed during World War II. Art Albertson gave one of the eyewitness accounts students heard during the three-week course.

"The one thing about this trip that I thought was important is that we're running out of time now with these people who have survived (WWII) because they are all in their 70s and 80s," [redacted] says. "So we don't have many more years to do this."

The 32 students toured parts of England, France, Germany and the Netherlands. They visited museums, landed on Normandy beaches, and toured Berlin, a concentration camp and Anne Frank's house.

"People got face to face with history instead of being in a class," says Associate Professor Oscar Larsen, a World War II historian and Netherlands native who taught the course. He says he wanted to expose the students to experiences of the past to better understand the present.

While in London the students visited the Imperial War Museum which houses a rebuilt WWII air raid shelter. When a siren sounded, the students were pushed into the shelter. Once inside, they heard bombs falling, a family talking and felt the shelter shake.

For [redacted] the sounds of the bombing brought back memories of the artillery fire he endured nearly 50 years ago. "Boy, that was an eerie feeling," he says.

At the end of the simulated air raid, the group walked out into devastated London. The experience worked on students' imaginations Larsen says. "History is a live thing, you should encounter it that way."

The museum gave the students a taste of WWII, the significance of which has been lost on this generation brought up on Vietnam War stories. "As far as World War II is concerned, I had very little knowledge going into this trip," says Bryan Robeson, a junior communications major.

While in England the students visited the Cabinet War Rooms where Winston Churchill and his staff made their war plans. They also visited Duxford Airfield where they spoke to WWII veterans of the Royal Air Force. Their last stop, the HMS Belfast, was a Royal Navy ship which took part in the invasion of Normandy. One of the ship's builders who served during World War II and the ship's captain from the early 1960s guided the students on a special tour.

From London, the group boarded a bus and ferried across the English Channel to Normandy where they saw the endless rows of white crosses in the cemetery above Omaha Beach. Silently, the students listened to [redacted]

German artillery fire had begun before [redacted] boat came close to shore, and at daybreak he watched as some of the boats around him were scuttled. The air was warm, but the combination of fear and the waist-deep water kept him chilled.

"There were only three fellows ahead of me and one of them was killed on the beach within an hour or so," [redacted] had to dodge artillery fire as he ran to shore. Planes strafed him and he was constantly on the lookout for land mines. He says he functioned on instinct.

"That night artillery kept a-comin' in and they'd send patrols over to see whether we were gaining strength on the beach head. And I remember the first night I dug my foxhole, I dug about all night," [redacted] says. He jokes that if he would have dug any deeper he would have needed a ladder to get out.

During the next few nights of the invasion, [redacted] adjusted to the stress and dug his foxholes



One of the captains of the HMS Belfast guides the students through the Royal Navy ship which was part of the invasion of Normandy.

Christopher Waters '94 and Jenny Barrett '95 peer out of a pill box at Pointe du Hoc in Normandy.



shallower. "And then after a while, I just hid in my helmet," he says.

██████████ eyewitness account gave the students a soldier's view of history, and they seemed to understand that one of the cemetery's white crosses could have been his.

██████████ says the story opened her eyes. "I know there are a lot of heroes in a war, a lot of people put their lives on the line," ██████████ says. "I didn't really realize he went through all of this."

██████████ made things a lot more interesting," says Robeson, who was awed by the fact that as they walked along Utah Beach, he was seeing history and hearing about it from an eyewitness.

On the beaches, the students were able to see how ferocious the D-Day battle was. Craters left by the bombs still exist, including some that are 50 feet in diameter. The students were like elementary school children at recess, says Lansen.

"They played war for two hours, running in bunkers, running out of bunkers, taking pictures."

The group went to Bayeux where they spoke to members of the French Resistance, including a Frenchman who was 17 at the time of the invasion.

Once in Berlin, the course focused on Hitler and the German war machine. At Wahnsee Villa, a museum where the extermination of the Jews was planned in 1941, the students learned how the Holocaust happened.

The Widestands Museum gave the students an understanding of German resistance to the Nazis. The museum is housed in former SS offices where Claus von Stauffenberg, one of the Germans who tried to assassinate Hitler, was executed.

Their last day in Germany was spent at the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp where students were given a tour by a Jewish man who was a former resident. Sachsenhausen was a work camp instead of an execution camp like Auschwitz, but over 100,000 inmates were executed by bullet and disposed of in crematoriums.

"If I had gone for just a day tour of the concentration camp, it probably wouldn't have been as effective as it was after studying this for a whole month," says Shannon Albertson.

██████████ says he felt the oppression of the place as soon as he walked inside and for days afterward he couldn't get the horror of it out of his mind.

While at the concentration camp, the past met the present. The students were unable to tour the Jewish barracks at the camp because it was burned down by Neo-Nazis a few weeks before. "It really hit them hard that this problem (Nazis) is more present

than they thought it was," Lansen says.

Their final destination was Amsterdam, where students toured the Anne Frank house, learning more about the Holocaust and the resistance to it.

The experience of World War II as told by its survivors gave the war a sense of reality that students can't get from a textbook. "It was really neat actually talking to people who fought against the Nazis and Hitler, who knew Hitler and saw Hitler face to face," says ██████████.

"This trip basically opened my eyes," says junior corporate communications major Christopher Waters. "I did not go with any strong convictions or a whole lot of knowledge about wars. So it gave me an incredible view of exactly what went on and some things to think about from different peoples' opinions."

At the American cemetery on Omaha Beach, the group saw row after row of white crosses marking the graves of American soldiers who died in the ferocious battle.



PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER WATERS