



21st Theater Sustainment Command
16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office

Warner Barracks,
Bamberg, Germany
DSN 469-7117
Commercial 0951-300-7117
Kevin.Alex@us.army.mil

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16th Sust. Bde. leaders visit historical D-Day sites

By Spc. Kevin Alex
16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs

Leaders from the 16th Sustainment Brigade participated in a brigade battlefield staff ride Sept. 19-21 to learn more from the historic events of June 6, 1944, when Allied forces landed on the coast of Normandy, France, to liberate Europe during World War II.

The group, comprised mainly of company commanders and first sergeants, also had training objectives in mind, said 16th Sust. Bde. Commander Col. Keith Sledd. They focused on the operational level, command and control, and sustainment – allowing them the opportunity to understand the challenges that could be encountered during forced entry and expeditionary sustainment operations.

The first day of the trip included a visit to the Pegasus Bridge at Bénouville, Gold Beach, Arromanches at Le Hamel and the German Navy coastal defense battery at Longues-sur-Mer.

The following day the group visited Utah Beach, airborne drop zones, glider landing zones and numerous other sites where units fought on D-Day.

“Sainte-Marie-du-Mont was a great place to stop,” said Capt. Christopher Webb, the brigade’s deputy communications officer. “It’s the town where the 506th Parachute

Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division – the men portrayed in “Band of Brothers” – landed on D-Day, and to be there, where they were, was humbling.”

Day three included visits to Pointe Du Hoc, the 1st Infantry Division monument and one of the German strongholds, WN62. Day three also included a walk to Fox Green and Easy Red Beaches, where the H-Hour assault of the 16th Infantry Regiment occurred, and a final stop in Colleville-sur-mer, at the site of the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial.

The most awe-inspiring part of the visit, according to Lt. Col. Christopher Luekenga, the 391st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion commander, was walking along the beaches and trying to imagine what the assault forces faced as they were coming ashore and had to cross the fields of fire over the sand dunes to get to dry ground.

“To see the physical terrain challenges they faced and had to overcome was just absolutely amazing,” said Luekenga. “It shows great resolve in the American Soldier.”

Sledd said he felt the staff ride provided an exceptional training event for the brigade’s junior leadership and provided them an opportunity to learn lessons from history that can be applied to future missions.

“I want to do more of these trips,” said Luekenga. “I think the Army owes it to itself. We learn from the past more than I think we realize.”



A tour guide talks to members of the 16th Sustainment Brigade about the history of D-Day next to the 1st Infantry Division memorial on Omaha Beach, Normandy, France, Sept. 21. The group took part in a three-day battlefield staff ride Sept. 19-21. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)



Members of the 16th Sustainment Brigade listen as a tour guide explains how the events of D-Day unfolded during a visit to the beaches of Normandy, France, Sept. 19. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)