This page was exported from - Almost-Daily Diary
Export date: Thu Mar 30 19:34:50 2017 / +0000 GMT

What they died for

There are over 9000 crosses at the American Cemetery in France. That's only 2 out of 5 who gave up their lives on the beaches of France in 1944; the rest were brought home for burial by their families. Maybe you knew that. I didn't.

I don't know who this guy was.

I do know that he didn't leave home that day wondering if he was going to meet his quota at work, or strong-arm his suppliers for a better margin, or battle it out with a competitor. He might have paid more attention to his shoes being shined and his shirt being tucked when he left his ship that day than an employee cares about the floor being swept. We worry about career choices and for most of us, a crap assignment is a bunch of

Someone asked a WWII veteran if it bothered him that people were now playing and drinking and swimming on the beach so many died on. He replied no, that's exactly why we fought that battle. So that others could enjoy such things.It makes sense; does a soldier fight believing that there's no hope for peace, that the battle will be endless? Surely not. Soldiers aren't looking to catch a bullet so that songs and plaques and statues will sing their praises once dead.

paperwork and if it's a crappy enough assignment some will skip it entirely. This guy was likely drafted yet it may never have entered his mind that he could do anything but his best because others depended upon him. And for that he gave up his life. Along with the fight to keep us free and allow people to have fun swimming and playing Frisbee on a beach that once ran red with blood.

This is what goes through your mind when you visit the American Cemetery in France. The rest of the day's details seem pretty insignificant-

8:45am Train from Paris to head to Bayeux, where we tour the town a bit before our half-day (not nearly enough, do not do a half-day tour!!!)

- 1:45pm Normandy Beach & American Cemetery tour
- 7pm Get dropped off at a gas station in the middle of nowhere to pick up our rental car (who knew that would be a perfectly-logical thing?).
- Drive to Pontorson by way of Mont Saint Michel (got to get a look at what we're up to for the next morning)
- 9pm check into our hotel,
- 9:15pm Head to a friendly pizza place around the corner (friendly yet perhaps not totally honest, as she claimed they don't

take credit cards and yet there was a sign in French on their counter that said they don't take credit cards for purchases under 10 euros, and ours was well above that!).

10:20pm -Midnight Work on photos and update diary with this trip info!

Tomorrow morning it's an early rush to Mont Saint Michel, before (hopefully!) the crowds hit. After that, a long-ish (4 hour) drive to Tours, with Thursday being spent seeing old houses, ok, big castles, Cheateuxs, whatever you want to call them. So far, the trip is executing according to plan. Not that I planned for so little sleep, but it is what I expected. Utlimately, my lack of sleep is of absurd insignificance compared to risking your life so that others may play frisbee on a beach.Â --Mike--