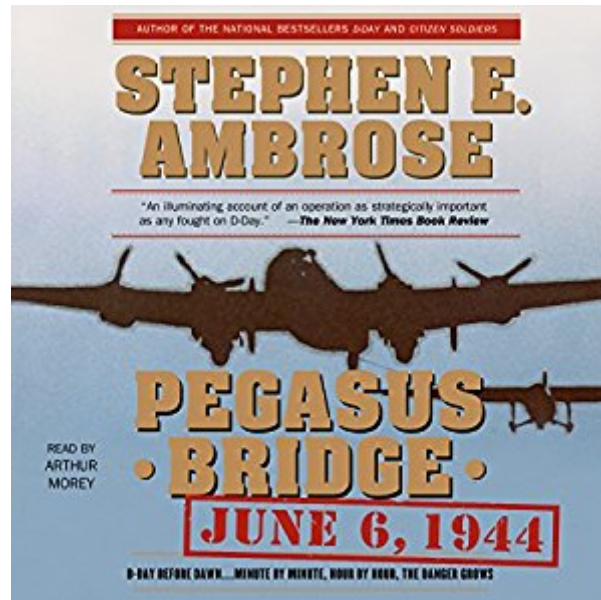




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Pegasus Bridge



Synopsis

In the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, a small detachment of British airborne troops stormed the German defense forces and paved the way for the Allied invasion of Europe. Pegasus Bridge was the first engagement of D-day, the turning point of World War II. This gripping account of it by acclaimed author Stephen Ambrose brings to life a daring mission so crucial that, had it been unsuccessful, the entire Normandy invasion might have failed. Ambrose traces each step of the preparations over many months to the minute-by-minute excitement of the hand-to-hand confrontations on the bridge. This is a story of heroism and cowardice, kindness and brutality - the stuff of all great adventures.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stephen Ambrose has done a remarkable job in giving the reader a front row seat to the fighting at Pegasus Bridge. His writing takes you right to the action and flows over into the heat of battle as if you were there at the time of the attack. He vividly describes the training leading up to the assault on bridge in such detail that you may need to set aside the book to rest, and catch your breath from the rigors of the last double time march. Even though this aspect of the invasion (Pegasus Bridge) encompasses such a small area, the high level of detailed research lends itself to a wonderful account of the early morning hours of 6 June 1944. This book is very easy to read and is a must for those intrigued by the battle that took place at this simple bridge over the Caen Canal in the Norman countryside.

There is a lot to like about this book. It's a relatively quick read compared to most fact based books about WWII. It's very well researched (as are all Stephen Ambrose books), and it's very easy to follow most of the time. The story is profoundly interesting, about a group of elite British soldiers who dropped into enemy territory on gliders and held arguably the most important bridge in the European theater on D Day. The book is a little older than some books you can find on the subject, but Ambrose was able to interview most of the survivors of the unit before they died, which lends to the historical accuracy of the book. Ambrose always interviews the enemy soldiers as well, which provides a unique perspective on the crucial battle. The only complaint I have about "Pegasus Bridge" is minor. Since the book is about British soldiers, and the majority of the subjects interviewed were British, Ambrose attempts to slide into their vernacular (outside of direct quotes) from time to time. Sometimes it works, but oftentimes it doesn't. Hardcore British verbiage can sometimes seem like a different language altogether, and you may find yourself re-reading certain passages in order to understand what's being said. All in all, a great book on a worthy subject, and my favorite Ambrose WWII book outside of Band of Brothers!

Having been stationed in Germany for three years I was fortunate enough to travel to many of the WWII battlegrounds that exist in Europe and the beaches that made up Operation Overlord is one trip that I will never forget. Before making the trip I read "Citizen Soldier," "D-Day" and "Pegasus Bridge" all written by Stephen Ambrose. I carried "D-Day" and "Pegasus Bridge" with me during my trip to use as a reference as I visited 4 of the 5 beaches involved in the D-Day invasion. "Pegasus Bridge" is the story of the men from D company from the Ox and Bucks Light Infantry Regiment of the British 6th Airborne Division. Ambrose does a masterful job of relating the story of these men and tying to results of the battle to the overall operation of D-Day. Ambrose gives the background on the training of the men, personal insights of many of the men, and the man who held them all together Major John Howard. As good as Ambrose tells the story of D company nothing compares to actually standing on that bridge and the feeling that you get thinking that right here is where the D-Day invasion began! Ambrose has included some great photos and drawing of the gliders landing site. When you visit the bridge itself you will find markers indicating the locations of the first three gliders and it is only then you will realize what a magnificent job of piloting Staff Sergeant Jim Wallwork did in landing the nose of his glider "to break through the barbed wire" as requested by Major Howard. Some the machine gun nest are still there beside the bridge and gives you an idea of what the men faced. The original bridge, replaced with a modern bridge, but thankfully was saved and is located nearby as part of a museum. "The first place liberated in France" is what the

Gondrée's café has as a label according to a plaque affixed over the entrance to the café. If you do not go inside you will miss a stunning collection of "Pegasus" military memorabilia! If you are lucky, you might even meet Madam Gondrée, who was a child at the time of the battle, and was still running the café at the time of my visit. She sat with friends and me and related a few stories concerning the story of the bridge and their current fight with the local government to preserve the café and other local building from a campaign to broaden the canal. As I walk around outside the café and bridge site, I used Ambrose's book to take me through the battle almost moment by moment. I could almost hear Lt. Brotheridge's Sten gun rattle off as he killed one of the two guards on the bridge that night and sadly wonder if he knew what he and his men accomplished that night as he lay dying only moments after engaging the Germans. If have any interest in the D-Day invasion then you cannot go wrong with this book. Ambrose does a wonderful job in presenting the story. The book is easy to read; I finished it in two days, yet does not insult your intelligence. If you do visit the Normandy region make sure you block out at least half a day to visit the bridge and Madam Gondrée's café you will not be disappointed. Ste.-Mèreglise is another place not to miss, but that is another story.

A suspenseful and interesting story. The canal bridge has been replaced but the old bridge was preserved so we can still see it. A good museum is now at the site. A glider can be seen. Plan to spend at least a couple of hours to see the bridge and tour the museum.

While Stephen Ambrose has written excellent works on a variety of subjects, I think his best books have been about WW II, where he has been able to fully utilize interviews with survivors not just as an additional historical source but as his major resource. This book, which focuses on the exploits of Major John Howard's D Company and its execution of a successful, brilliant and brilliant coup de main to capture intact and then hold until relieved two extremely important bridges in Normandy shortly after midnight on June 6, 1944, joins "Band of Brothers" as Ambrose's most intimate work. In my opinion, it is a must read for all aficionados of the war fought by The Greatest Generation.

One of the books I could not put down once I started it. Enjoy the author's writing style a lot.

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