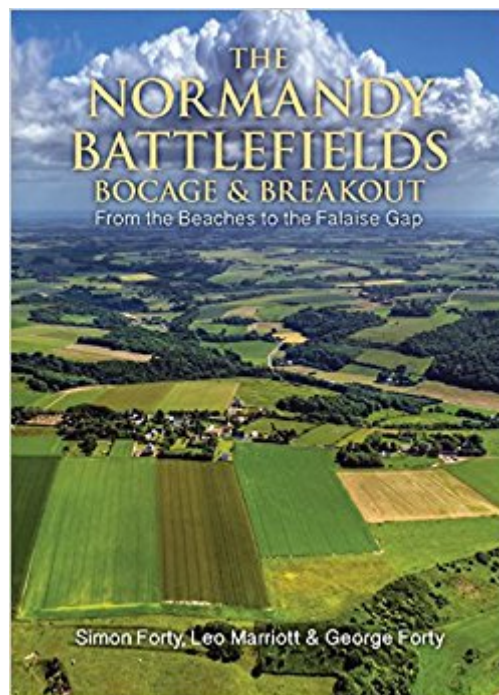




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The Normandy Battlefields: Bocage And Breakout: From The Beaches To The Falaise Gap



Synopsis

The Normandy Battlefields details what can be seen on the ground today using a mixture of media to provide a complete overview of the campaign. Maps old and new highlight what has survived and what hasn't; then-and-now photography allows fascinating comparisons with the images taken at the time. The Normandy Battlefields: D-Day & the Bridgehead ended as the Allies fought to expand their D-Day foothold. In Bocage and Breakout, Leo Marriott and Simon Forty take the story forward as the success of the invasion continued into the Cotentin, with Cherbourg falling on 29 June, before it bogged down in face of determined German defense and the bocage countryside – a countless small fields surrounded by hedgerows, each one hiding anti-tank weapons, mortars and machine guns. As US First Army fought its way south, on the eastern edges of the bridgehead, British and Canadian forces were fighting a war of attrition around Caen facing the bulk of the German armor as division after division was fed into Normandy. Like a pressure cooker, the fighting intensified until, seven weeks after D-Day, Operation Cobra broke the German line. Quickly Patton's Third Army, operational from 1 August, flooded through the gap exploiting the German confusion, encircling what was left of the German armies in the Falaise Pocket and advancing quickly through into Brittany. Three weeks later, the Battle of Normandy was over, the routed German Army without most of its heavy weapons left in the Falaise Pocket or on the banks of the Seine was retreating helter skelter back towards Germany and the Low Countries pursued by the Allies in a reverse of the 1940 Blitzkrieg campaign. The three months of war in June–July 1944 were brutal, with losses of front-line troops as heavy as in World War I. The German defense was tenacious, particularly in face of Allied air supremacy. The Allies struggled to get into a position to allow their more mobile forces room for maneuver and the fighting was ferocious. When victory came, it came at a cost: 209,672 casualties among the ground forces, including 36,976 killed and 19,221 missing. The Allied air forces lost 16,714 airmen. The corresponding German losses were even more significant: some 450,000 men, of whom 240,000 were killed or wounded. More important to the Germans were the losses of heavy equipment – tanks, assault guns, artillery, personnel carriers. As an example, 12th SS Panzer Division had lost 94% of its armor, nearly all of its artillery and 70% of its vehicles. With c20,000 men and 150 tanks before the campaign, after Falaise it had 300 men and 10 tanks. Mixing text, maps and images, many of them specially commissioned including aerial photography, The Normandy Battlefields: Bocage and Breakout explains and interprets the complexities of the Normandy campaign in an original and cohesive package.

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Customer Reviews

"This will appeal across a wide range of military tastes - the modeller, the military historian, the battlefield visitor, and the wargamer - and at a very fair price for a book of this calibre." (Miniature Wargames)
"Essential reading for anyone with an interest in the military history of WW2 and specifically the D-Day landings. Amazing photographs and maps, this is a coffee table book you will not be able to put down! Marriott and Forty know their subject and share their expertise and knowledge in a way that's not been available in previous books about such a complex subject matter." (Books Monthly)
"Messrs Forty and Marriott provide a seriously entertaining look at events in Normandy from ground level and all points upwards using the perfect mix of facts and dates aligned to genuinely excellent archive and modern photography. I cannot fault this book and thoroughly recommend it." (War History Online)

Leo Marriott is one of Britain's most respected authors on naval history. He has written over 30 books on ship design and naval warfare. He is a keen yachtsman and lives in Somerset.

Great book, wonderful pictures.

Excellent book!

Love these books. After taking a trip to France last year, looking at these pictures is fascinating.

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