

BOMBER COMMAND COUNTRY TOUR WITH TED BARRIS | HOSTED



Ted Barris, Historian and Best-selling Author

JOIN TED BARRIS AS WE EXPLORE THE CANADIANS' ROLE IN THIS REMARKABLE WWII STORY.

Facing the prospect that Hitler's armies might cross the Channel and invade, in 1940, Britons braced for **The Blitz**, intense German bombing of the U.K. In this darkest hour, the Royal Air Force's Arthur Harris said, "They that sow the wind, shall reap the whirlwind." Almost immediately, Commonwealth aircrews – many of them Canadian – gathered at air bases across Britain to fly nightly against enemy targets in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Our new "Bomber Command Country Tour" takes travellers to the heart of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Our stops in Yorkshire include: Andrew Mynarski Memorial; Betty's Café and Tea Room; guided tour of former station RAF Tholthorpe; Yorkshire Air Museum, and visit to York's famous Railway Museum and York Minster cathedral. Then in Lincolnshire: a guided tour of RAF Scampton, home of Dam Buster 617 Squadron; International Bomber Command Centre; RAF East Kirkby, home of "Just Jane" Lancaster; RAF Coningsby, home of Battle of Britain Memorial Flight; and Lincoln cathedral, all while based at our home-away-from-home the unique Petwood Hotel, WWII quarters of the Dam Busters Squadron. Also, stops at IWM Duxford, RAF Hendon, Cambridge American Cemetery and full-day tour in London visiting related Bomber Command sites.

10 NIGHTS

DEPARTURE DATE

Oct. 1, 2019

Toronto \$6,195* p.p.

INCLUDES

- Round-trip airfare
- Plaza Premium airport lounge pass
- York: four nights 4-star hotel accommodation at the Grange Hotel
- Lincolnshire: four nights 4-star hotel accommodation at the Petwood Hotel
- London: two nights 4-star hotel accommodation at the Danubius Hotel Regents Park
- 10 breakfasts, two lunches and six dinners
- Private motor coach transportation
- Professional local tour director for the duration of the tour
- Merit Travel tour host*
- All taxes and gratuities



Day 1 – Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2019 – Toronto-London

Depart Toronto Air Canada Flight 848; departs Toronto at 20:40 p.m., arrives London, Heathrow at 8:35 a.m. the following day.

Day 2: Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2019 – London-York (dinner)

After arrival at the London airport, travellers will rendezvous with our tour guide for the trip, Edward Foster, and our driver and coach for the northbound trip to the City of York, the starting point of our tour of Bomber Command stations of WWII. On this first evening, we'll enjoy a Welcome Dinner with the entire tour group. It's a Ted Barris tour tradition. It's a first opportunity to meet and share the anticipation of the coming days of travel and exploration. Check into the Grange Hotel for four nights.

The Grange Hotel 4*

1 Clifton | York YO30 6AA | Tel: 44 1904 644744

Day 3: Thursday, Oct. 3, 2019 – York (breakfast, lunch)

Breakfast at the hotel. Our route takes north from City of York to visit several No. 6 (RCAF) Bomber Group station sites and commemorative locations, including RAF Middleton St. George (Andrew Mynarski memorial, small M.S.G. museum on-site, and coffee break); RAF Croft (quick stop to visit memorial); RAF Skipton-on-Swale (short visit at derelict station hut and short stop at in-town crash site). At midday we arrive at town of Tholthorpe and the New Inn for lunch. After lunch, we meet local historian and long-time resident of Tholthorpe, Geoff Wood, who has memories of RAF Tholthorpe station, and the principally Canadian bomber crews who flew from the station. Geoff will take us onto the station grounds for two-hour tour. Among the featured locations of the RAF Tholthorpe station visit is the original station control tower; it was purchased privately by Rosie & Paul Walker who now run an Airbnb operation there. En route back to York, we'll pass RAF Linton-on-Ouse a working air station; we can stop beside the airfield and if aircraft are flying, take photos. Return to hotel. Overnight at our lodgings in York.

Day 4: Friday, Oct. 4, 2019 – York (breakfast)

Breakfast at hotel. Today we visit and tour several attractions in the city, including its Railway Museum (two hours); York Minster Cathedral. We then make our way to The Shambles in the old town portion of York where 14th century buildings offer an array of shops and restaurants; the group will shop and lunch at will and have the afternoon to themselves. Overnight at our lodgings in York.

Day 5: Saturday, Oct. 5, 2019 – York (breakfast, dinner)

After breakfast at the hotel, we travel southeast from York to the sprawling 20-acre Yorkshire Air Museum facility at Elvington. Among its many attractions: over 60 aircraft and vehicles, "Friday the 13th," Halifax Bomber in Europe; original 1940s RAF base buildings, huts and hangars; 15 indoor exhibitions highlighting all the bomber and fighter aircrew trades as well as restaurant and a souvenir shop. After a half-day at the Yorkshire Air Museum, the group returns to York. Tonight our group reconvenes for a special evening gathering at Betty's Café and Tea Room, the regular eatery and watering hole for many Canadian aircrewmen who were stationed in the area and serving in Bomber Command during WWII. At 8:45 p.m. enjoy dinner in Betty's Tea Rooms-Belmont Room. Overnight at our lodgings in York.

Day 6: Sunday, Oct. 6, 2019 – York-Lincolnshire (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

We leave York, but make one final stop in the part of Bomber Command Country where No. 6 (RCAF) Bomber Group (principally Canadian airmen were stationed) at the Stonefall Cemetery at Harrogate. Nearly all of the 988 Second World War burials in Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery are of airmen, two-thirds of them Canadian. We will take 30-60 minutes to visit Canadian graves and leave flags and poppies as is our tradition.

Leaving Yorkshire, we travel south and west to the High Peak District (west of Sheffield) to visit the Derwent Dam and Reservoir, over which the Dam Buster crews trained in spring 1943 for the raid against the Ruhr River dams. Our lunch spot is a favourite in the area, the Ladybower Inn. Following lunch, we travel southeast into Lincolnshire to Woodhall Spa and our lodgings for the next four nights, the Petwood Hotel, which – after the May 1943 raid – became the officers' mess for No. 617 RAF Squadron, by then known as the Dam Busters Squadron. Check into the Petwood Hotel at Woodhall Spa and enjoy dinner this evening at the hotel.

The Petwood Hotel

Stixwood Road | Woodhall Spa | Lincolnshire LN10 6QG
Tel: 44 1526 351900



Day 7 – Monday, Oct. 7, 2019 – Lincolnshire

(breakfast, dinner)

The Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre is an aviation museum in East Kirkby. It was opened to the public in 1988 by Lincolnshire farmers Fred and Harold Panton, as a memorial to their older brother, Christopher Whitton Panton, who died during WWII. The centre's main exhibit is Avro Lancaster Mk VII, NX611, named "Just Jane" after a popular wartime comic character. As well, on this day, our travels take us to the centre of the City of Lincoln, over which towers the famous Lincoln Cathedral. Our visit will include a specially arranged stop to the chapel set aside to commemorate Britain's war dead. While our trip has not included as many cemetery visits as usual, one important destination will be the small Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery near Scopwick, where visitors can attend the grave of John Gillespie McGee, the RCAF pilot, born in China, raised in the U.S., trained as a pilot in Canada, and author of the famous poem "High Flight." McGee died in a training accident in 1941 and is buried near the station where he served. Over the first three evenings spent at the Petwood, we anticipate two of the nights at the hotel would include a Petwood Presentation specifically on the Dam Busters and Petwood Hotel themes. For one of the nights a Dam Busters historian would deliver a talk/presentation. On the other night, Emma Brealey, director of the Petwood, will reveal the history of the Petwood and its extraordinary (if eccentric) Lady Grace Emily Weigall Maple.

Overnight and dinner at our lodgings the Petwood.

Day 8 – Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2019 – Lincolnshire

(breakfast)

One important stop of the day is a tour of the RAF Scampton base. Based on our investigation trip visit in the summer of 2018, we will meet our experienced guide Tom Evans for a full tour of RAF Scampton, home of No. 617 RAF "Dam Busters" Squadron; the tour will take up half a day and Tom and another guide will each take half of our group for the tour of Guy Gibson's office, squadron exhibits and displays.

The other major stop of the day is the International Bomber Command Centre, an interpretation centre and memorial relating the historical impact of Bomber Command during WWII. The museum facility offers the stories of the servicemen and women who carried out the wartime actions of Bomber Command; in that sense, it's more an interactive introduction to the lives of those who served. Outside the museum, but within the grounds is the Spire Memorial (made of COR-TEN, a weathering steel) erected in 2015, reflecting the connection to Lincoln Cathedral and standing 102-feet high (wingspan of a Lancaster bomber). The spire is encircled by walls carrying the names of all 57,871 men and women who gave their lives while serving in or supporting Bomber Command.

The evening our group is free to have dinner at leisure in the village of Woodhall Spa.

Overnight at our lodgings at the Petwood.

Day 9 – Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2019 – Lincolnshire

(breakfast, dinner)

Our major stop of the day is to visit RAF Coningsby and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight which provides an aerial display group usually comprising an Avro Lancaster, a Supermarine Spitfire and a Hawker Hurricane, three iconic wartime aircraft flying operations with the Commonwealth Air Forces during WWII. The aircraft are regularly seen at events commemorating the Second World War and upon British state occasions, notably Trooping the Colour marking Queen Elizabeth's official birthday, as well as Royal weddings. However, since we're visiting in October, the blessing is we'll see all three aircraft in the hangar. None will be in the air; all will be serviced in the BBMF hangars available for us to see.

On this final day in Lincolnshire, we will also allow time to visit the Dam Busters Memorial in the main square of Woodhall Spa; that will allow our travellers to investigate the village, explore its shops and enjoy a midday meal.

The evening is rounded out by our Petwood Presentation (mentioned above).

Overnight and dinner at our lodgings the Petwood.

Day 10 – Thursday, Oct. 10, 2019 – Lincolnshire-London

(breakfast)

We leave the Lincolnshire area and travel to two more aviation must-sees- the world-famous Imperial War Museum at RAF Duxford airfield, complete with a wartime Fighter Command control centre and acres of pristine Second World War aircraft. Then finally stop at the Cambridge American Cemetery which contains such important U.S war dead markers as those of Big Band Leader Glen Miller and Joe Kennedy. The tour then heads back to London for our final nights in Britain.

Check into our hotel in London for two nights.

Danubius Hotel Regents Park 4*

18 Lodge Road | St. John's Wood | London NW8 7JT
Tel: 44 20 7722 7722

Day 11 – Friday, Oct. 11, 2019 – London

(breakfast, dinner)

Day in downtown London to visit Bomber Command Memorial, Cabinet War Rooms, etc. Enjoy a half day beer-tasting tour with a local guide including tasting four beers in a themed tour. The rest of your afternoon is at leisure for shopping in London.

After the day in London, we gather for another Ted Barris tradition on these tours – the Farewell Dinner.

Day 12 – Saturday, Oct. 12, 2019 – London - Toronto

(breakfast)

Today we will check out of our hotel and transfer to the airport for our departure for Toronto. Air Canada Flight AC849 departs London, Heathrow at 14:10 p.m. arrives Toronto at 16:55 p.m.



TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESPONSIBILITY

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- (a) Fault or negligence or omissions on the part of the said travel service suppliers;
- (b) Illness, theft, strikes, mechanical problems, quarantine, governmental intervention, weather conditions, acts of hostility or violence, and any other grounds beyond our control;
- (c) Your failure to obtain passport, visas, other travel documents or inoculations
- (d) Your failure to advise us the name of the traveller exactly as it appears on the passport;
- (e) Your failure to report on time at an airport or ground transfer facility;
- (f) Material damages, theft or other mysterious disappearances of your goods;
- (g) Personal injuries or death;
- (h) Force Majeure – an event(s) beyond our, or our supplier(s), reasonable control including, but not limited to, acts of God, strikes, lockout or other labour disputes or disruptions, wars, blockades, insurrections, riots, earthquakes, weather conditions, floods or acts of restraints imposed by governmental authorities.

PRICING

All prices are per person in Canadian dollars unless otherwise noted. GST, HST and provincial taxes are applicable on tours as noted.

INCREASE IN TOUR COSTS

Merit reserves the right to increase tour prices in the event of an increase in government and airport authority imposed taxes and fees, fuel and currency surcharges, supplier price increases, or any other cost increase. If the increase is greater than 7% of the tour cost, the client may cancel the booking within seven days of notification and obtain a full refund.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

A deposit of \$750 per person is required at the time of booking. Full and final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

Deposit requirements for some tours may vary. You will be advised of such cases at time of booking.

LIABILITY

Merit cannot assume responsibility for any costs incurred for any travel arrangements purchased separately from the Merit tour. Merit's responsibility shall extend only to the provisions of advice as to industry-standard or supplier recommended connections and check-in times.

Provided Merit supplies such advice, they shall not be responsible for missed connections or departures, regardless of the cause.

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN (INSURANCE)

Trip cancellation and interruption insurance, medical and hospital insurance, baggage insurance, and various additional insurances are available and HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. If you choose not to purchase insurance, you are

required to sign an Insurance Waiver Form. Note that if you choose not to purchase insurance, you are fully liable for any and all penalties imposed as stated under Cancellation Policy on this page. Please speak to your representative at the time of making reservations about insurance.

REFUNDS

The nature of travel involves risks and unpredictable weather and thus Merit cannot assure any departure or arrival times at any point of an itinerary. Your right to receive a refund is limited.

There will be no discounts or monies refunded for any missed or unused services.

Merit reserves the right to cancel the tour for any reason. Should this occur, a full refund will be made to the traveller.

CANCELLATION POLICY

While Merit will do its utmost to minimize any penalties charged, there are irrecoverable costs associated with your tour. The following penalties will be considered the costs incurred with cancellation:

- (A) 90 days or more prior to departure: Loss of total deposit.
- (B) 89 – 60 days prior to departure: Loss of 50% of total tour cost.
- (C) 59 days or less prior to departure: Loss of 100% of total tour cost.

Cancellation penalties for some tours will vary and there may be additional penalties associated with the airfare. If so, these policies will be noted separately at time of booking and will prevail.

TOUR CHANGES

We reserve the right to substitute itineraries, hotels, airlines or vessels due to conditions beyond our control. In such cases we will do everything possible to ensure the locations visited, the excursions taken and the hotels offered are similar to the ones originally planned. Any change to itineraries will not result in eligibility for a refund.

REVISION FEE

Changes to your tour reservation might not be possible. Should you request a change and we are able to accommodate it, you will be subject to any charges imposed by the airline or tour suppliers. In addition, we reserve the right to charge a \$50 revision fee for any change made after the deposit is paid. A change in name or departure date may constitute a cancellation, and the corresponding penalties may apply.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION

All passengers travelling internationally must travel with a passport. Many countries require the passport to be valid for 6 months beyond the traveller's return date. Visas may be required for some destinations. It is the passenger's responsibility to obtain at the passenger's expense, all documentation required by all relevant authorities. In the event that the passenger does not possess the correct documentation, the air carrier has the right to refuse passage.

DESCRIPTION

Every effort has been made to describe and produce the travel services and photographs as accurately as possible in the printed tour description. However we reserve the right to correct errors and we will make all reasonable efforts to inform you should any significant changes occur.

Please note that the living standards and local conditions during your tour may be different from what you are accustomed to at home.

CONSENT

Your retention of tickets, reservations or bookings after issuance shall constitute your consent to the above terms.

If you encounter any concerns during your tour, please inform your local travel service provider. If the matter cannot be resolved, please inform Merit Vacations in writing upon your return.