

# Operation Jericho: RAF Raid on Amiens Prison



Operation Jericho was a low-level World War II bombing raid on 18 February 1944, by Allied aircraft on Amiens Prison in German-occupied France. The objective of the raid was to free French Resistance and political prisoners due for imminent execution. The raid is remarkable for the precision and daring of the attack, which was filmed by a camera on one of the aeroplanes. Nineteen Mosquito Mk.VI aircraft [6 aircraft of No 487 (RNZAF) Squadron, 6 aircraft of No 464 (RAAF) Squadron, 6 aircraft of No 21 Squadron and one aircraft of the Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU)] were detailed to attack the north and east walls and buildings of the prison. There were 700 prisoners detained at the time of the attack and of this number 102 were killed, 74 wounded and 258 escaped. Among those who escaped were important members of the Resistance movement.

## Day One:

Guests are met by MHT at Lille Eurostar station at 11:30 before we head down to Amiens arriving at lunchtime. We drive past the prison to familiarise ourselves with the target then after a lunch stop and tour briefing our first stop is Gestapo HQ. Here we explore the background of the Gestapo in general and the Amiens Gestapo in particular. We then conduct a briefing on the prisoners and their resistance activity as well as visiting local sites connected with resistance before heading to our hotel in Amiens to have a talk on photo reconnaissance and in particular the importance it played in locating precision targets.

## Day Two:

We start a few kilometers from the prison, the subject of the low level precision raid, and gather at the site of the final run in. Here we discuss the squadrons, the aircraft, personnel, politics, tactics and procedures - and of course the finer details of the raid. We discuss, with the aid of photos and maps, the damage caused to the prison and the human cost of the raid and pay our respects at the prison memorial. As well as casualty numbers on the ground we consider the fate of the aircrews. We make our way out of town to visit the crash site of Group Captain Pickard, RAF and Flight Lieutenant Broadley, RNZAF before paying our respects at their graves at St. Pierre Cemetery, Amiens.

## Day Three:

We head to the crash site of Squadron Leader McRitchie, RAF and Flight Lieutenant Sampson, RNZAF. McRitchie, although wounded, crash-landed his Mosquito in a field at high speed near the French village of Fresneville in the area of Villeroy. He survived the crash and was taken prisoner, but 39-year-old Sampson was killed instantly by hits on the aircraft from the German AA gun. He is buried in St Denis Eglise cemetery at Poix de Picardie, a short distance from Amiens and our next destination. After lunch we explore the stories of the escaped resistance fighters and political prisoners and the extent and effect of German reprisals on the local population. Mid afternoon we head back to the Eurostar station at Lille for the early evening trains back to London and on the way we visit examples of other Mosquito low level precision bombing raids: V Rocket launch sites.

## What's included:

*Hotel Bed & Breakfast  
Accommodation*

*All transport from  
the official overseas  
start point*

*Accompanied for the  
trip duration*

*All Museum entrances*

*All Expert Talks and  
Guidance*

*Low Group Numbers*

*Low Single Room  
Supplements*

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*"I just wanted to thank  
you for the trip, it was a  
great experience & both  
Nicky and I enjoyed  
it very much. Your  
depth of knowledge on  
the subject certainly  
brought the past alive."*

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## Military History Tours

is all about the 'experience'. Naturally we take care of all local accommodation, transport and entrances but what sets us aside is our on the ground knowledge and contacts, established over many, many years that enable you to really get under the surface of your chosen subject matter.

By guiding guests around these historic locations we feel we are contributing greatly towards 'keeping the spirit alive' of some of the most memorable events in human history.

Let their sacrifice not be in vain.