

Robert Moxley
Globetrotting Around Europe: My Six Weeks Studying Abroad

It all started with a plane ride, first stop JFK airport and from there across the pond to the Republic of Ireland and the city of Dublin. In the six weeks that followed our first day I visited five countries, met some great people, and learned loads about the Second World War. This summer thanks to the help of the Globetrotter Grant I participated in the Europe Rudder study abroad program put on by Texas A&M. The program consisted of two three hour courses focusing on WWII history and European politics after 1930, respectfully. While the program took us to many of the battlefields and landmarks associated with American involvement in WWII my friend and I took the opportunity, while in Europe, to do a bit of travelling on our own.

The first day in Dublin, with my travelling partner Paul Schubert, we started off with a meal of fish and chips then hit the shopping centers around St. Stephen's Green. We walked many of the streets in Dublin with a guided tour hosted by a student from Trinity College. That evening, we took advantage of our centralized Temple Bar hostel and made the rounds through the pubs where traditional Irish music spilled out of every open door. The next morning after two Advil and a spot of breakfast we made our way to Marrison Square Gardens. Along the way we bumped in to two nice American girls who spent the remainder of the afternoon with us touring Dublin Castle,

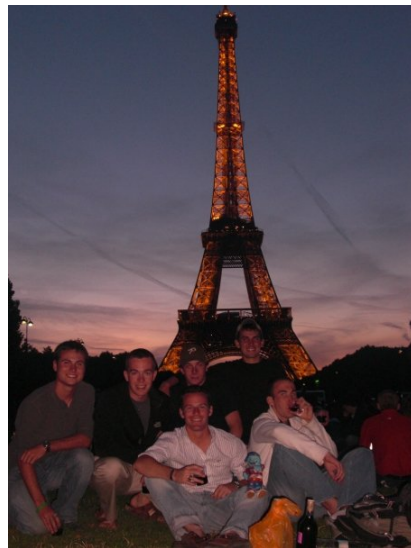


Trinity College, and alas a pint of Guinness. After saying goodbye to our new friends that evening Paul and I set out for the Backpackers Pub Crawl which took us to some of the more quaint pubs away from Temple Bar. A great experience for meeting new people I would recommend a Pub Crawl to anyone who wants to see where Dubliners go after five o'clock. Continuing the theme from the night before, the next morning both Paul and I along with a new friend from Denmark toured the Guinness Brewery and Old Jameson Distillery. I cannot say enough about my time in Ireland and it was with a heavy heart that we left the next morning for London, England.



Upon arrival in the UK and deciphering the London Underground we set out for our hostel near Oxford Street. An early evening by Irish standards we went to bed knowing that we had a lot to see the next day. We set out at nine o'clock on a free walking tour which took us to many of the big sites around London; Hyde Park, Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, Parliament, Westminster Abbey, and Big Ben to name a few. After a long day we settled down for a bit of fish and chips and prepared ourselves for another pub crawl that evening. Leaving from Covent Garden around eight we tipped our pint glasses through Soho and Leicester Square all the way to Piccadilly. The next morning after an exciting Fourth of July evening Paul and I headed for the Churchill Museum with a flight on the London Eye scheduled for later that afternoon. Being that it was our last night in London we decided to take it easy and catch a movie since the next morning we would leave for France after a quick tour of Madam Tussauds.

Late in the evening, after several long delays in London, we landed in Paris, France where we would meet our study abroad group the following morning. Once we met our group of twenty students and two professors we immediately departed for Caen the capital of Normandy and our home for the next two weeks. With Caen as our starting point we were able to see many of the important towns and landmarks related to the D-Day landings and subsequent Allied advance. Classes were held every other day with a field trip scheduled for off days. During these trips we visited a number of museums, gun emplacements, cemeteries, and small



towns. Among the towns we visited were St. Mere Eglise, Arrowmanche, St. Malo, Bayeux, Mount St. Michelle, and Saint-Lo. In addition to the towns we visited we were able to tour Omaha Beach and Point du Hoc where Lt. Col. Earl Rudder led his 2nd Ranger Battalion on the morning of D-Day. What was so great about spending such a long time in one place was we were able to live like Normans, even though briefly. We shopped in the market set up on Sunday mornings, we celebrated Bastille Day in the town center, and we socialized with the locals as much as our limited French allowed.

Weekends in Caen were left open for our own personal travel and on our first we decided to rent a car and see some of the smaller towns we were unable to visit as a part of our study abroad classes. Our first stop was Honfleur which is a small yet famous tourist destination sporting an original Monet painting in one of the towns many art galleries. From there we drove to Le Havre, a major port town, then on to Touques for a quick cup of espresso before making our way back to Caen. The following weekend we decided to make Paris our destination to catch the end of the Tour de France. Since the Tour ended on Sunday we spent Saturday travelling to Versailles to view the massive palace and gardens there. On Sunday before the Tour we took the opportunity to visit the Louvre and see many of the exhibits it had to offer.

The last leg of my six week European Expedition was spent namely in the small town of Otzenhausen, Germany. Located on the West German boarder Otzenhausen provided easy access to Belgium, Luxembourg, and France in just a few hour drive. Between days of class lectures the group travelled to Bastogne, Belgium; Luxembourg City, Luxembourg; and Metz, France. In Bastogne we were privileged to be guided around the city by a native Belgian who survived WWII. Our guide took us, among other museums and memorials, to the foxholes where members of the 101st Airborne Division withstood brutal German attacks during the Battle of the Bulge. Seeing the actual holes in the middle of the Ardennes Forest where men of the 101st lived was an eye opening and rare experience. Metz, France offered a similarly rare experience as the group toured elements of the Maginot Line which was built by the French to prevent another German attack along their eastern boarder after WWI. The segment that we toured was well maintained after the war and vast expanses of tunnels and gun emplacements were open for viewing by the public. Soon after visiting the Maginot Line it was time to leave Otzenhausen and make for Frankfurt where we were all to catch flights home and end our six week odyssey.

I cannot say enough good things about the Texas A&M Europe Rudder study abroad program or the Globetrotter Grant which made it possible for me to attend. In the six weeks I was abroad in Europe I gained experiences and friends that will last my life time. While there was never a shortage for a good time in the evenings the most impressionable things about my trip were getting to see where history was made and the people who were there to make it and relive their stories.

