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Normandy

It's a crisp, clear morning as we step out of our car and make our way to the stone monuments that detail the history of the Normandy invasions in WWII. They stand solid and dark amidst a beautiful Norman plain, tall grass and scruffy trees that speak of shoreline. It feels like hallowed ground, and everyone hushes their conversations as they approach, whispering in French, English, Spanish, German, Italian. A sandy path leads out to the sea, and its pockmarked cliffside frozen in time known as the Pointe du Hoc. Grass has grown over the dips and holes blown into the ground by war more than 70 years ago, but twisted wrecks of concrete and barbed wire lay where they fell, half-buried and woven into the landscape. The ravaged ground speaks more clearly to the horrors of war, and the bravery of the men who fought it, than any quote, any speech, any memorial could ever hope to achieve.

A few miles down the road, their graves overlook the sea in endless rows on the peaceful, windswept coast of Colleville-sur-Mer.

