



Boys Reflect on Sacrifice at Normandy Graveside

St. Ambrose College boys reflected on the debt they owe a previous generation of young men on their trip to the American Cemetery in Normandy.

This year 150 boys at their end of their first year at the Catholic grammar school in Hale Barns Catholic undertook their own mini Normandy landings, but thankfully without the horrors of 1944.



Pictured are Connor Dutton and Conn O'Neill.

Accompanied by 15 teachers, they visit the Bayeux Tapestry and go to the island retreat of Mont St. Michel, but the most moving trip is “always to see white crosses of the war dead,” says French teacher Phil Howard.

Mr Howard, whose has been part of the trip for over 30 years, said: “The mood is always quiet, reflective but also questioning with boys commenting on the dates on the crosses and how one young man might have died on June 6 but another lasted a few more days. They appreciate these men were very young, indeed, could have been their older brothers, and that gives food for thought.”

Mr Howard added: “The next day we go to see the German Mausoleum, a sombre some might say utilitarian building, which contains the ashes of even more young men than the Allies lost, but is raised above the ground so no German is buried on French soil. Again the mood is one of thoughtfulness and thanks their generation and generations since have so far been spared the sacrifice.”

Head of Languages and trip organiser Martin Toal said: “We speak French throughout the trip and it does help immensely with their language skills, but it is also an end of year celebration in which the boys come together and really begin to identify as Ambrosians.”