

Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours

Ardennes / Battle of the Bulge 7-Day / 6-Night Small Group Battlefield Tour 7 – 13 June 2023



Photo of the 277th VGD and 99th Inf. Div. Memorial by Hollerath. Photo by Graham Gaulke.

On our 2023 Ardennes Tour get knee deep into history with us AND with special guest guide Roland J. Gaul, who will spend a day with us covering the 28th Infantry Division and the 4th Armored Division's advance to Bastogne!

Hitler had decided to put all his eggs in one basket to defeat the Western Allies with one great push, the operation "Wacht am Rhein." Starting on 16 December under terrible weather conditions the German Panzer Divisions broke through the thin American frontlines. Despite a strong resistance by several American units, the German Army made its way west. The famous "Kampfgruppe Peiper" advanced under circumstances that became tragic for all.

Soon the German units arrived at the main center of communication in that region, the town of Bastogne. The grim defense of Bastogne, mainly units from the 101st Airborne and 10th Armored Divisions, became famous and stands now for the strong will of the Allied Commanders and the simple GIs to finally defeat the Third Reich.

On Christmas Eve 1944 the reconnaissance battalion of 2nd Panzer reached the most western point of the Bulge, only a few kilometers away from the Meuse-River at Dinant.

Already from 22 December on, American counterattacks on the southern part of the Bulge had started to open the way to Bastogne. Finally, on 26 December the first Sherman tank made its way into the town. At latest from this day on, the German commanders realized that this offensive failed and that further fighting would be senseless. Nonetheless, the fights continued almost until the end of January 1945.



First evening briefing by Markus Klauer



7th Armored Division Memorial Sherman, St. Vith



Sanatorium St. Edouard, Stoumont, scene of heavy fighting against KG Peiper

Schedule: (Subject to Modification)

Pick-up and return point for this tour will be Brussels Airport (BRU). A specific meeting point will be provided later. Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from the meeting point. Participants with their own vehicles can arrange to meet us at the starting hotel.

Day 1—Wednesday, 7 June—Pick up at BRU at 12:00pm. Evening briefing and introductory dinner.

Day 2—Thursday, 8 June—Initial advance in the northern sector, with a focus on the area around Elsenborn and the Siegfried Line (Westwall), Skyline Drive, 106th Inf. Div. and St. Vith.

Day 3—Friday, 9 June—Focus on the advance of Kampfgruppe Peiper: Büllingen, Baugnez, Stavelot, Malmedy, La Gleize and Neufmoulin.

Day 4—Saturday, 10 June—Focus on the defense of Bastogne, including visits to the Bastogne War Museum.

Day 5—Sunday, 11 June—Focus on the 28th Division and the advance of the 4th Armored Division into Bastogne. This day will be led by guest tour guide Roland Gaul.

Day 6—Monday, 12 June—Focus on the German advance of the 2nd and 116th Panzer Divisions of the Fifth Panzer Army toward the Meuse River.

Day 7—Tuesday, 13 June—Morning departure at 9:00am to BRU. We expect to arrive at the return point by 11:00am, but delays are always possible.



About Knee Deep Into History, LLC and its Battlefield Tour Philosophy

Knee Deep Into History, LLC was founded by Randy Gaulke after he spent eight months during 2017-18 as a freelance guide to the American battlefields of WW1. During those eight months (and the prior thirty years) Randy's tour philosophy has evolved. Key tenets of his philosophy include:

1. Getting clients into the field as much as possible; in contrast to a "museum and memorials" tour.
2. Guiding small-group tours to ensure greater interaction with the guides.
3. Attempting to present a balanced view of both sides of the story.
4. Designing a tour for those seriously interested in history.
5. Introducing clients to local, not American, culture.

General Tour Format—What can you Expect from a KDIH Tour?

- This small-group tour is designed to enable maximum interaction between participants and guides; size is limited to a maximum of 18 participants.
- Unless otherwise noted in the tour brochure, there will be two guides on each trip, normally including one non-American guide to enhance the international nature of the tour.
- Clients will be picked up and returned to the designated meeting point at the times indicated.
 - Clients desiring other arrangements need to communicate their needs to Randy Gaulke in advance with the understanding that KDIH has to balance an individual client's needs with the group.
- The tour will be conducted in one or two nine-person vans or possibly one minivan and one car.
 - If the tour exceeds twelve to fourteen clients, we will hire a small coach for greater comfort.
- We plan to stay in three-star traditional European hotel / restaurants.
- The evening of day 1 will include our first tour briefing followed by an introduction dinner.
- On tour days, participants should expect to be "in the field" from 09h00 to somewhere around 17h00, regardless of weather. This will be followed by a short break and dinner around 19h00 or 19h30.
 - Participants should bring appropriate clothing for the field, and nicer clothes for evening meals.
- Spouses and mature young adults are welcome, but please understand that there will be limited down time for sightseeing or time off.
- On our 7-day tours we pledge that at least half of our hotel nights will be in large towns / small cities, making it easier for those less interested in military history to "opt-out" for a day or two. We also pledge that we will structure at least two cultural events into the tour.
 - Depending on the region, this could include visits: to unique churches or other buildings; to alcohol producers (champagne, calvados, etc.); or to Mirabelle orchards, dairies, specialty food producers, etc.
 - It could also include dinners with key locals and their spouses.
- We make no such pledges for our shorter tours.
- Regarding meals:
 - Continental breakfast will be served at the hotel.
 - Modest sandwich lunches (with wonderful European bread) will generally be eaten "in the field" to conserve time.
 - Snacks of water, soda, fruit and sweets will be available for free in the van to recharge one's batteries. Depending on the schedule and other factors, we will sometimes stop for coffee in a local café.
 - Multi-course dinners will generally start at the hotel restaurant around 19h00.
 - Traditional European dinners often last two hours +/-; this gives participants a chance to socialize and share their thoughts on the days' activities among each other and the tour guides.
 - On a 7-day tour we will generally include one dinner "on your own" in a large town / small city.
- Most costs are included in the tour price. Costs not included are: 1) all dinner drinks, 2) dinners or lunches specifically excluded, including the dinner "on your own" mentioned above, and 3) souvenirs.
 - Also, transportation costs, including airfare, to the pick-up and return location is not included.
- We plan to visit key American Battle Monuments Commission Cemeteries and Memorials as well as German (and other national) military cemeteries and memorials in the area.
- We hope to make our tours international in nature and the tour is being marketed to European clients too, but no promises can be made.

If this tour format sounds attractive to you, we look forward to getting you knee deep into history!

Meet Tour Guides, Randy Gaulke, Markus Klauer and Roland Gaul

Randy Gaulke has been studying military history for decades as a wargamer, reenactor and battlefield visitor. In 2017 he left the corporate world and in 2017-18 he lived and worked eight months in France as a freelance guide to the WW1 battlefields during the WW1 Centennial. His experiences during those eight months convinced him to follow his passion and start a tour business. Randy has also visited the Ardennes and Normandy several times since 2010. In total, he has lived in Europe for more than two years and he speaks fluent English and German and intermediate French. He lives in Winchester, VA, not far from the National Archives. Randy also maintains the website <https://meuse-argonne.com> and the Meuse-Argonne.com Facebook group.

Markus Klauer is a retired Bundeswehr Officer whose military career included five years in an armored battalion and professional work with American and French units. Like Randy, Markus has been studying military history and visiting battlefields for decades. He has written five books in German covering WW1 and his website can be viewed at <https://gb.weltkriegsbuch.de>. Since retiring in 2018 Markus has been expanding his battlefield research to the battlefields of WW2, including the Ardennes, Sedan 1940, Normandy and the Seelow Heights near Berlin. Markus lives in Lille, France and he speaks German, English and French fluently.

Randy and Markus have known each other for nearly 30 years. Their first major collaboration was a Small-Group Battlefield Walk Series of the Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Salient and a Meet and Greet Dinner during the 2018 Centennial Commemoration. This was followed by a successful 2021 Knee Deep Into History tour season. Both share a deep love of historical research and a desire to get their clients into the field. With their language and cultural skills, both understand the “other side,” and both strive to present a balanced view of the combat.

Special Guest Guide Roland Gaul is a well-known expert on the Battle of the Bulge. He was the initiator (1982) and long-term curator of the Diekirch National Museum of Military History. He is also the author of four books on the Battle of the Bulge focusing on the Southern Flank of the offensive. Roland has appeared in numerous television documentaries. He has been a tour guide for several decades, and he has the advantage of having met scores of veterans during his years of collecting, researching and guiding.



Oct. 2022 meeting of all three guides to discuss areas of cooperation.

Select Feedback from Knee Deep Into History, LLC's 2022 Tour Season

"...This is my second visit with you and I am working on my third and fourth visits in the future. Most of all I want to thank you for helping not just one, but now two, of my sons to gain an incredible appreciation for WW1 and their great-grandfather. There is nothing like getting to walk in his footsteps..." *Matt Treaster, Kansas.*

"You have provided me one of the best experiences of my life in the historical arena. In many ways it is superior to the drama of the first "take" in filming the First Manassas battle scene in North—South Pt. II... While it was good, yours was better as it was on the real ground and intellectually stimulating. Your scholarship is awesome and MAKES your program—especially through your analysis of period photography. I hope to use your talents again for my wife, Viola, to gain some perspective on her father in WW1." *Matt Switlik, Michigan.*

"It is always a boon when your expectations of a great learning experience turn into a grand WW1 adventure with two guides whom are first-class historians. The two tours I took cleared many uncertain opinions about the war... My interest in artillery and narrow-gauge railways was a cause that Markus and Randy accepted and lead me to many interesting sites..." *Ken Baumann, Michigan.*



Roland showing guides Randy and Markus the signage his group created at the Schumann's Eck Memorial Trail.

Pricing and Payment Details:

- The price is \$2,500.
- Single supplement please add \$200.
- An initial deposit of \$600 is required, with the balance due 8 April 2023 (60 days prior to departure.)
- Both the initial deposit and the balance can be paid by check or via PayPal invoice.

Refunds and Cancellation Policy:

- This tour requires a minimum of 4 participants.
 - If we do not have 4 participants by 7 April 2023 (61 days prior to departure), we will cancel the tour and refund your payment, less any transaction fees.
 - **For this reason, we caution you about booking non-refundable airfare prior to that date.**
- Please see the terms and conditions for our 2023 cancellation policy.

Terms and Conditions:

- Please review our separate 2023 Terms and Conditions.

Insurance:

- Clients are encouraged to check into tour interruption / cancellation insurance to cover unforeseen incidents or family emergencies.
- American participants, especially those with chronic health conditions, are strongly encouraged to check with their health insurance provider regarding coverage overseas in case of emergency.
- Most American insurance policies do not extend overseas.

Tour Hotel(s) :

- We anticipate spending three nights at the Hotel Reiff, a family-owned three-star hotel in Fischbach-les-Clervaux, Luxembourg and three nights at the Hôtel du Lac, a three-star hotel in Bütgenbach, Belgium.
- While Bütgenbach is a small town, the Hôtel du Lac is situated near a lake offering some beautiful walking areas and a nearby bicycle / walking path.
- As stated elsewhere, the hotel is subject to change due to unforeseen events.

Cultural Events:

- As this is a 7-day tour, we will be offering two cultural events. However, plans are still being finalized.

Questions or Concerns:

- Please contact Randy Gaulke at 908.451.0252 or kneedeepintohistory@gmail.com with any questions or concerns. He is more than happy to assist you.

2023 Tour Registration Form
Ardennes / Battle of the Bulge 7-Day / 6 Night Tour
7 – 13 June 2023

Participants: _____ (Names and ages)

Primary Contact: _____

Address: _____

Contact Email(s): _____

Contact Phone(s): _____

Rooms Needed: _____ Double Rooms _____ Single Rooms

Emergency Contact(s): _____

Emergency Phone(s): _____

Health Concerns: **Per the Terms and Conditions, participants are required to factually state any health concerns that could affect their participation on this trip. Please outline these concerns in a brief letter.**

Other Needs: _____

Participant Signatures: _____

Reminder: To complete your registration you must send: 1) signed copies of the registration form, 2) signed copies of the 2022 Terms and Conditions page 4, and 3) a \$600 per-person deposit.

Please mail / email / text a copy of this form to:

Randy Gaulke, 124 East Clifford Street, Winchester, VA 22601 USA

kneedeepintohistory@gmail.com

908.451.0252