

Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours

Third Reich Underground—Rockets, Aircraft and More! Small Group Battlefield Tour 13 - 18 May 2024 (6-days / 5-nights)



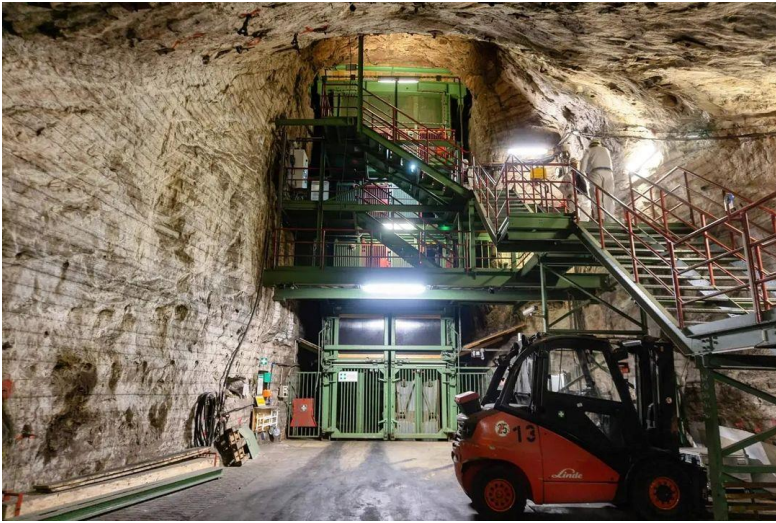
Prepare to get knee deep into history where the desperate German war industry went underground to avoid Allied bombardment, burying their factories and assets in disused mines or newly-built tunnel systems, hundreds of which were under construction all over the *Reich* by the war's end.

Join KDIH in a six-day tour of the underground installations in central Germany, along with associated forced labor sites. Participants will visit the *Mittelbau-Dora* concentration camp, entering the tunnels where the Nazis assembled the infamous V-2 rockets and V-1 flying bombs, as well the secret *REIMAHG* factory complex for the assembly of the Me-262 jet fighter, and an exclusive visit to the underground factory which made the jet engines for these aircraft.

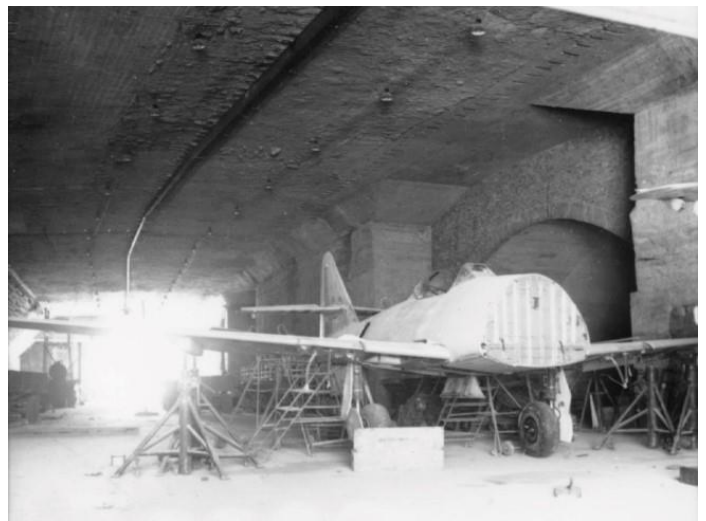
In addition to underground production sites, many mines were used to store valuable assets; the tour will take participants over 500 meters underground through an elevator shaft into one of Germany's vast salt mines, with a visit to the room where Patton's army famously discovered the *Reichsbank's* gold reserves in 1945.

During the last years of the war, tens of thousands of slave laborers were forced to work on the Nazis' ambitious construction projects, and the tour will include stops at *Buchenwald*, one of the first concentration camps established and one which provided the labor for many of the underground sites, as well as *Ohrdruf*, the first concentration camp liberated by US troops, where inmates had to dig tunnels for an unfinished headquarters for the Nazi government.

Other sites will include an underground jet fuel refinery, where Jewish-American POWs were forced to excavate over a dozen tunnels in the last months of the war and a natural cave that was transformed into a secret aircraft factory.



Shaft at the Merkers salt mine, where Patton's Army discovered the Reichsbank gold reserves. Photo by Graham Gaulke.



Unfinished Me-262s at the REIMAHG factory.



Concentration camp inmates assemble V-2 rockets in the Mittelwerk tunnel system in Nordhausen (Photo by Walter Frantz, Gedenkstätte Mittelbau-Dora)

Schedule: (Subject to Modification)

Pick-up and return point for this tour will be Frankfurt Airport (FRA). 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—Monday, 13 May. Pick up at FRA at 12:00pm. Drive to hotel. Down time and briefing at hotel before the reception dinner. Stay overnight in Weimar, Germany. Time for shopping and sight-seeing in Weimar before dinner.

Day 2—Tuesday, 14 May. Buchenwald Concentration Camp in the morning and Berga Concentration Camp/Schwalbe V, where Jewish-American POWs were forced to build an underground jet fuel refinery, in the afternoon. Stay overnight in Weimar, Germany. Time for sight-seeing in Weimar before dinner.

Day 3—Wednesday, 15 May. Mittlebau Dora Concentration Camp walking tour, including the underground V-1 and V-2 factory. Heimkehle, Junkers aircraft factory in a natural cave, and Ellrich (aka Mittlebau II), the largest Dora sub-camp. Stay overnight near Kahla, Germany.

Day 4—Thursday, 16 May. REIMAHG sites (secret Me-262 jet fighter factory) starting at the Museum in Kahla and continuing up the Walpersberg mountain. This will be the most physically-demanding walking day of the tour, including walking up the Walpersberg to the former Me-262 runway. Stay overnight near Kahla, Germany.

Day 5—Friday, 17 May. Kamsdorf, the secret underground jet engine factory for ME-262s in an abandoned iron mine. This will be an exclusive underground tour to parts of the factory not normally open to the public, guided with flashlights and helmets. This will be a physical day, spending several hours underground. Cultural break: After the Kamsdorf tour we will visit the 13th century Leuchtenburg Castle, which overlooks the Thuringian landscape. Stay overnight near Kahla, Germany.

Day 6—Saturday, 18 May. Visit and commemoration ceremony at Ohrdruf, the first concentration camp liberated by U.S. troops, and the Jonastal Valley, where inmates worked on a secret bunker. Afternoon tour of Merkers Salt Mine, where Patton's Army discovered the Reichsbank gold reserves as portrayed in *The Monuments Men*. Drive back to FRA.

The tour ends upon the arrival at FRA. Tour participants are responsible for arranging their own accommodation or further travel plans the night of 23 May. We anticipate arriving at FRA around 7:00pm.



Photo by Graham Gaulke

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

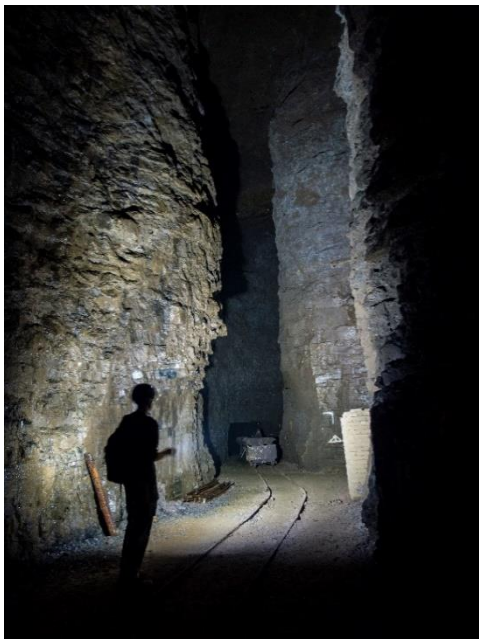
Knee Deep Into History, LLC was founded by Randy Gaulke after he spent eight months during 2017-18 as a freelance guide to the American battlefields of WW1. During those eight months (and the prior thirty years) Randy's tour philosophy has evolved. Key tenets of his philosophy include:

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?

- Two things that we need to stress upfront regarding this above and below-ground tour:
 - We will be spending a significant amount of time underground in large rooms and in smaller galleries. This tour is NOT ideal for people with claustrophobia.
 - There are a few days planned where participants need to be able to walk 2-3 miles at a moderate pace over moderately rough terrain in order to participate in the day's activities.
 - Participants can choose to opt out these days or to stay with the van for a portion of the day, but they will be missing important sites.
 - The best strategy is to work up to this pace prior to the tour!
- This small-group tour is designed to enable maximum interaction between participants and guides; size is limited to a maximum of 12 participants.
- This tour will be led by Graham Gaulke, Patrick Brion and Randy Gaulke. (See page 5.)
- 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 people movers.
- 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.
 - We have also worked in a 13th century castle visit (Schloss Leuchtenburg) and down time in Weimar, Germany.
- Regarding meals:
 - Continental breakfast will be served at the hotel.
 - Sandwich lunches (with wonderful European bread) will 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 may stop sometimes 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.
- Most costs are included in the tour price. Costs not included are: 1) all dinner drinks, 2) souvenirs and 3) your lodging selection on the night we return you to FRA Airport, where the tour ends.
 - Also, transportation costs, including airfare, to the pick-up and return location are not included.
- As outlined in the itinerary, we will be visiting concentration camps and their sub-camps.
 - We will hold a commemoration event at Ohrdruf on the last day of the trip.

Meet Tour Guides, Graham Gaulke, Patrick Brion and Randy Gaulke



Graham Gaulke's passion for exploring the Third Reich's underground manufacturing sites ("Untertage Verlagerungen") began a decade ago, when he explored an underground aircraft factory in Waltenheim, France. Since then, Graham has visited and documented dozens of aboveground and underground sites; and he has combined these visits with archival research in Washington, D.C. and in other archives. As a result, Graham has developed a thorough understanding of the Third Reich's efforts to move its arms productions underground and the inextricable relationship that this has had with forced labor. Graham has attended several concentration camp commemorations and his photographs can be found on the information panels at several historical sites and on his website, <https://graham-gaulke.format.com>.

In December 2020 Graham Gaulke graduated from Webster University's Leiden, Netherlands campus, with a Bachelor's Degree in international business (major) and international relations (minor). However, his Netherlands location was also a perfect springboard for Graham's underground explorations!

Patrick Brion, currently living in Kahla, Germany, has been actively researching and working to preserve some of these sites since the Wall came down in 1989. He will be leading the REIMAHG portions of the tour. More details can be seen on this website: <https://www.walpersberg.de>.

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.

Select Feedback from Knee Deep Into History, LLC's 2023 Tour Season

"This week has been a dream come true for me, thanks to the meticulous preparation and execution of the two of you. I truly felt as if I was walking in the footsteps of my grand-uncle in WWI and of my dad in WWII, seeing what each of them was seeing, and trying to imagine what each of them might have been thinking and feeling during their respective wartime experiences. I couldn't have asked for a more meaningful experience and the way the two of you embraced my entire family made the experience even more magical and memorable for me. I can't thank you enough!" John Decker.

"You have both far exceeded my expectations on this trip. I have been on many tours and know how they should be done and you two have surpassed them all. The time you both put in to personalize the trip details was extraordinary. The most thrilling part for me was sharing this experience with ALL of my brothers. We have never traveled like this all together and I was not sure how that would work out. Thanks to you two it was fabulous. And to have Aidan and my grandson Jake as part of this is a thrill of a lifetime. They will never forget this experience. Thank You!" Bill Decker.

"On behalf of the men, women and horses of the Second Company Governor's Horse Guard, we can't thank you enough for your professionalism, organization and friendship on this tour. Being able to walk in the footsteps of our unit and men during the Great War has been a tremendous experience. However, visiting the cemeteries and honoring our fallen has been very emotional and the highlight of this journey. With kindest regards and admiration." Capt. Paul Mazzara, Lt. Col. Stephen L. de Friesse, 1st Lt. Barbara Spremullo and Lt. Col. Gordon Johnson.

Pricing and Payment Details:

- The price is \$2,280
- Single supplement please add \$256.
- An initial deposit of \$600 is required by 13 February, with the balance due by 14 March. (60 days prior.)
- Both the initial deposit and the balance can be paid by check or via PayPal to kneedeepintohistory@gmail.com.

Refunds and Cancellation Policy:

- This tour requires a minimum of 4 participants.
 - If we do not have 4 participants by 13 March 2024 (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 2024 cancellation policy.

Terms and Conditions:

- Please review our separate 2024 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 the first two nights at a hotel in Weimar, Germany and spending the last three nights in a hotel just outside of Kahla, Germany.
- In both cases, these will be three-star traditional European hotels.
- Of course, hotel selection is subject to change due to unforeseen events..

Cultural Events:

- We have organized a visit to the 13th Century castle, Schloss Leuchtenburg.
- There will also be down time for shopping and sightseeing the first two evenings in Weimar, Germany.

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.

2024 Tour Registration Form
Third Reich Underground—Rockets, Aircraft and More!
13 – 18 May 2024 (6-days / 5-nights)

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 2024 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