

Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours

WW1 AEF Sites in and Around Paris



Photo courtesy of Marty Lewis

Dealing with Parisian traffic and staying on schedule is a challenge on the best of days. For that reason, KDIH generally avoids including Parisian sites on tours. However, there are numerous well-documented WW1-related American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) sites in and around Paris. Many of our clients spend time in Paris or at an airport hotel before or after the tour. Therefore, we are delighted to provide this list so that clients can visit these sites on their own terms. Enjoy!

We have not included GPS coordinates, because inserting the names and addresses in your smartphone should suffice in finding the location.

This is very much a work-in-progress. If you know of sites that should be added, please email Randy Gaulke at kneedeepintohistory@gmail.com. Many thanks to several long-time friends of KDIH, who have added to this list, especially Marty Lewis and Valerie Young!

General Sites

- Arc de Triomphe and France's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (at its base)
- Place des États-Unis / Square Thomas Jefferson
 - Monument aux Volontaires Américains

- This monument is dedicated to American members of the French Foreign Legion (FFL). It was dedicated by Poincaré on 4 July 1923.
 - The soldier standing atop the statue was patterned after FFL volunteer and poet Alan Seeger, who was killed in action on the Somme on 4 July 1916.
 - Seeger is best known for his poem, “I Have a Rendezvous with Death.”
- Tomb de Marquis de La Fayette, Cimetière de Picpus
 - Site where, on 4 July 1917, AEF Colonel Charles L. Stanton gave the keynote address with the famous phrase: “Nous voila, Lafayette.” [Transl. Lafayette we are here.]
 - Don’t forget to visit the mass grave just east of Lafayette where thousands of victims of The Reign of Terror are buried.
- Harry’s New York Bar, 5 rue Daunon
 - According to Wikipedia, it was converted into a bar from a bistro in 1911 by American jockey Tod Sloan. It became a favorite hangout for expats during WW1; and it is said to be the birthplace of several classic cocktails, including the Bloody Mary, French 75, Sidecar and Monkey Gland.
- American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, 23 Ave George V
 - Several memorial plaques for both wars can be found in this Episcopal cathedral.
- American Legion Sites
 - 18 Ave de la Motte Piquet, Cirque de Paris
 - This is the site where the Legion was founded in March 1919. However, the building no longer exists.
 - 49 Rue Pierre Charron aka “Pershing Hall”
 - The Legion started meeting here in Nov 1919. In the 1920’s the American Legion purchased this building and renovated the façade and interior. Sometime in the 1960s the Legion lost the building, and it is now a hotel. They dream to get it back.
 - The façade incorporates the keystone from the bridge over the Marne at Château-Thierry and has Doughboy faces in stone above the rez de chaussée (ground floor) windows.
 - Post 1 still exists in Paris. The current address, per Google Maps, is 22-24 Blvd. Diderot
 - Website: www.parispost1.com
 - American Legion Masoleum, Cimetière Ancien de Neuilly, 3 Rue Victor Noir
 - Founded in 1936, expat vets and spouses can be interred here.
- Stade Pershing, Route du Bosquet Mortemart (in the Bois de Vincennes)
 - This stadium was built by the YMCA in 1919 in honor of General Pershing. It hosted some of the football matches of the 1924 Olympics. It currently hosts American baseball games.
- Monuments Pershing-Lafayette, 146 Ave. des États-Unis, Versailles
- Élysées Palace Hotel, 103 Avenue des Champs-Élysées
 - HQ of the AEF in Paris and an officers’ club
 - Mata Hari hung out here and was arrested in the building.
- US Navy HQ, 6 Place d’Iéna
 - Formerly Hotel Guimet, it is now the Guimet Museum of Asian Art.

American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) Cemetery

- Suresnes American Cemetery, 123 Blvd. Washington, Suresnes
 - Contains the graves of 1,559 Americans from WW1 and 24 unknown Americans from WW2, as well as 974 WW1 missing soldiers whose names are inscribed on bronze tablets

Related Specifically to the Lafayette Escadrille

- Lafayette Escadrille Memorial, 5 Blvd. Raymond Poincaré, Marnes-la-Coquette
 - Dedicated on 4 July 1928
 - Since January 2017 maintained and owned by the ABMC
- Alice Week's Apartment, 80 Rue Boissière. Very close to Arc de Triomphe
 - Alice was a well-connected American expat and early supporter of the Escadrille. Many an airman hung out at her apartment on leave in Paris.
- American Ambulance Hospital, 55 Blvd. du Château, Neuilly-sur-Seine
 - Dr. Gros was an American doctor and who was instrumental in the formation of the Escadrille. He was on staff at the hospital during WW1.
- Hôtel des Invalides, scene of group photo on 4 July 1917
 - See the 'then and now' photo in Ruffin's book on the Lafayette Escadrille.
 - Also, on 3 July 1917 elements of the 1st Div encamped in the courtyard and areas of Hôtel des Invalides. On 4 July they marched along the Seine down Quai d'Orsay to Pont de la Concorde, crossed the Seine, marched thru Place de la Concorde to the NE corner, turned on Rue de Rivoli, marched East toward Place de la Nation, and turned onto Rue de Picpus. They encamped in the courtyard of Picpus after the 4 July ceremony.
- Group des Divisions d'Entraînement (GDE) at Plessis-Belleville, a small town a few miles north of Paris.
 - This was the French pilot pool, where pilots who completed training awaited assignment to a squadron.
 - Ruffin has a 'then and now' photo of the Hôtel de la Bonne Rencontre, which was a favorite hotel choice for Lafayette Escadrille pilots. It is no longer a hotel, but the building still stands.

Related Specifically to the American Field Service

- Headquarters, 21 Rue Raynouard
 - Looks very different today than it did at that time
 - Good 'then' photos in "Friends of France: The Field Service of the American Ambulance described by its members" published by Houghton Mifflin Company in 1916

Related to Post-war Battlefield Pilgrimages

- These two entries were taken from a 1920 battlefield guidebook. They reflect the immediate post-war period, NOT today.
- "Service for American Relatives Visiting Cemeteries" Information Bureau, 4 Avenue Gabriel
 - Situated almost next door to the Graves Registration Bureau
 - The Service was a cooperative endeavor between the American Army, American Red Cross and American Y.W.C.A.
- Graves Registration Bureau, 12, rue Boissy d'Anglais

Non-AEF, but Related to Germany's Paris Gun, Spring 1918

- Église Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais, 18 Rue Clovis
 - This church was too damaged from a German long range shell that struck the church on 29 Mar 1918 during Good Friday mass, killing 91.

For Further Reading

- Field Service of the American Ambulance. **Friends of France: The Field Service of the American Ambulance described by its members.** Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1916.
- Garey, E.B., Ellis, O.O. and Magoffin, R.V.D. **An American Guide Book to France and its Battlefields.** The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920.
- Ruffin, Steven A. **The Lafayette Escadrille: A Photo History of the First American Fighter Squadron.** Casemate Publishers, Havertown, PA, 2016.
- Van Ells, Mark D. **America and WW1: A Traveler's Guide.** Interlink Books, Northampton, MA, 2015.

At Knee Deep Into History, we strive to develop small-group WW1 and WW2 battlefield tours for those with a strong interest in military history. These tours are designed to get you into the field, explain both sides of the story and help bridge the cultural gap between the U.S. and Europe. Our schedule, philosophy, experience and testimonials can be found at <https://kneedeepintohistory.com>.

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