

Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours



WWII American Experience—28th Infantry Division Small Group Battlefield Tour 27 May – 4 June 2026 (9-days / 8-nights)



28th Inf. Div. soldiers talk with locals in the first liberation of Bastogne, 10 September 1944

Get knee deep into history walking in the footsteps of soldiers of Pennsylvania's 28th Infantry Division. This National Guard division faced several severe tests during its combat time in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). Landing in July 1944, the division was quickly thrown into the Normandy break-out, pushing inland south of St. Lo. Thereafter, it chased the Wehrmacht across France. In late fall 1944 it would face its two greatest challenges: First, the meat grinder known as the Battle of the Hürtgen Forest, the USA's longest and bloodiest European fight during WW2. Second, once withdrawn, the "quiet" sector of the Ardennes, just before Hitler's famous offensive on 16 December. The division would be withdrawn on 22 December; but would still see action in early 1945, helping to reduce the Colmar Pocket.

This 9-day tour will start with a look at the American portion of the D-Day landings and airborne operations in Normandy. It will then explore the break-out around St. Lo before moving to the Hürtgen Forest and Ardennes and finishing with the Colmar Pocket. The focus will be on the role of the division through each of these major theaters, using personal accounts, then and now photos, maps and divisional records.

We will commemorate the division's dead by visiting the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and the Brittany American Cemetery. Collectively, over half of the division's casualties buried in Europe lie in these cemeteries.

This tour is being conducted as a fundraiser for the WWII American Experience Museum in Gettysburg, PA. \$150 of each registration will be paid to the museum, increasing to \$250 if the tour has >12 participants.



Top: Remains of a German bunker in the Hürtgen Forest.

Middle: The bronze statue of the Angel of Peace is bestowing the olive branch upon the heroic dead at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Belgium.

Bottom: Traditional dinner at the end of a successful day in the field



Schedule: (Subject to Modification)

The tour will start and end at Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG). A specific meeting point will be provided later. Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from the meeting point.

Two notes: First, on 29 August 1944 soldiers of the 28th participated in a march down the Champs-Élysées in a Liberation of Paris Parade. The tour will NOT visit this location, because of the hassles of driving in Paris. Participants who want to visit the site can arrive earlier or stay later. Second, we will be visiting the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and the Brittany American Cemetery. Together, over 50% of 28th Inf. Div. soldiers buried in Europe are resting in these two cemeteries.

Day 1, Wednesday, 27 May. Introduction. 12:00pm pick-up at CDG. Drive to Normandy. (Approx. 3:30.) Cultural activity—Calvados tasting and farm tour. First night briefing and dinner. Hotel TBD in Normandy.

Day 2, Thursday, 28 May. Focus on the American Normandy landings. Airborne drop zones, Utah Beach, Omaha Beach. Today will include a visit to Normandy American Cemetery. Hotel TBD in Normandy.

Day 3, Friday, 29 May. Finish Normandy landings, Operation Cobra and the Breakout. Focus on Operation Cobra and the subsequent breakout from the Normandy bridgehead, with an emphasis on the role of the 28th Inf. Div. Today will include a visit to Brittany American Cemetery in St. James, France, and to the Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof in Huisnes-sur-Mer, France. Hotel TBD in Normandy.

Day 4, Saturday, 30 May. Morning visit to Mont Saint-Michel, then drive toward the Hürtgen Forest. Visit Mont Saint-Michel in the morning. Depart at noon and drive to Reims, France. Hotel TBD in Reims.

Day 5, Sunday, 31 May. Reims, France, Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Hürtgen Forest Intro. We will visit the Surrender Museum in Reims in the morning. Then we'll drive to Henri-Chapelle American cemetery en route to the Hürtgen Forest. We anticipate having time to visit the Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Vossenack and to do an afternoon walk in the Hürtgen Forest. Hotel TBD near Bütgenbach, Belgium.

Day 6, Monday, 1 June Hürtgen Forest morning and Ardennes Offensive afternoon. We will explore the Hürtgen Forest and villages in the morning before driving to the Ardennes in the afternoon. We will focus on the opening moves of Hitler's Ardennes Offensive in the Northern half of the Ardennes, including the actions of the 99th and 2nd Inf. Divisions and the advance of Kampfgruppe Peiper, including Malmedy and La Gleize. Hotel near Bütgenbach, Belgium.

Day 7, Tuesday, 2 June. Ardennes Offensive—Luxembourg, Bastogne and Vicinity. Initial focus on the German advance from Dasburg, Germany and the 28th Inf. Div. fighting in and around Clervaux, Luxembourg. We will also visit Wiltz, Luxembourg, where the American Saint Nick helped to raise local morale in early December 1944, before the battle of the Bulge. Finally, we'll continue to Bastogne and explore American efforts to hold and German efforts to capture Bastogne during the offensive. Hotel TBD in Bastogne, Belgium.

Day 8, Wednesday, 3 June. Ardennes Offensive and Drive to Colmar. Morning focus on Bastogne defense before driving to Colmar, France in the afternoon. **Farewell dinner in Colmar.** Hotel TBD in Colmar, France.

Day 9, Thursday, 4 June. Colmar Pocket. Morning focus on the division's role in capturing Colmar and reducing the Colmar pocket in early 1945. Afternoon drive to CDG Airport. The tour officially ends upon arrival at CDG in the early evening. Participants are responsible for selecting their own hotel and making their next travel plans. Some decide to visit downtown Paris. Others book a room at a near-airport hotel and fly home the next morning. Others rent cars and drive to their next destination.

Tour Overview

Tour Price (based on double occupancy)	\$3,690
Single Room Supplement	\$570

Tour Price Includes*

- TWO military historian guides, one American and one German, who understand both sides of the story and who speak multiple languages and understand European culture
 - Local guides at specific sites as needed
- 3-Star accommodations, typically in European family-owned hotel / restaurants
- Transportation typically in comfortable 9-person people movers with A/C or in cars
- Almost all meals, except those specified as “on your own” in the itinerary
- Water, soda and snacks available in the van
- Cultural outings (calvados tasting, church tour, etc.) and shopping time on trips longer than a few days
- Admission fees to all sites

Tour Price Excludes*

- Transportation to and from the starting point and lodging and transportation before or after the tour’s start and end times; for example, the cost of a hotel night for participants who choose to arrive early.
- Dinner drinks
- Dinners or lunches specifically excluded in the tour brochure
- Souvenirs and gifts

*See the tour’s 2026 Terms and Conditions for full details.

Questions or concerns? Contact Randy Gaulke at kneedeepintohistory@gmail.com or 908.451.0252.



German anti-tank gun in Clervaux, Luxembourg, a key town for the division during the Battle of the Bulge

Knee Deep Into History's Tour Philosophy

Knee Deep Into History, LLC was founded by Randy Gaulke in 2020 after he spent eight months in 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. We:

1. TAKE clients into the field,
2. GUIDE small-group tours (12 max.),
3. PROMOTE a balanced view of both sides,
4. OFFER tours for passionate history buffs,
5. BRIDGE cultures.

What to Expect from a KDIH Tour

- Our small-group tours are designed to enable maximum interaction between participants and guides. Size is generally limited to a maximum of 12 participants.
- Clients will be picked up and returned to the designated starting and ending 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.
- 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 break and dinner around 19h30.
 - Participants should bring appropriate clothing for the field, and nicer clothing for evening meals.
 - Please see the clothing guide on our website for ideas.
- Spouses and mature young adults are welcome, but please understand that there will be limited down time for sightseeing and time off.
 - When moving from one hotel to another, it will generally not be possible to stay in town.
- 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.
 - 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, ask questions of the guides and share their experiences of the day.
- This tour requires a minimum of ten customers and a maximum of eighteen customers.

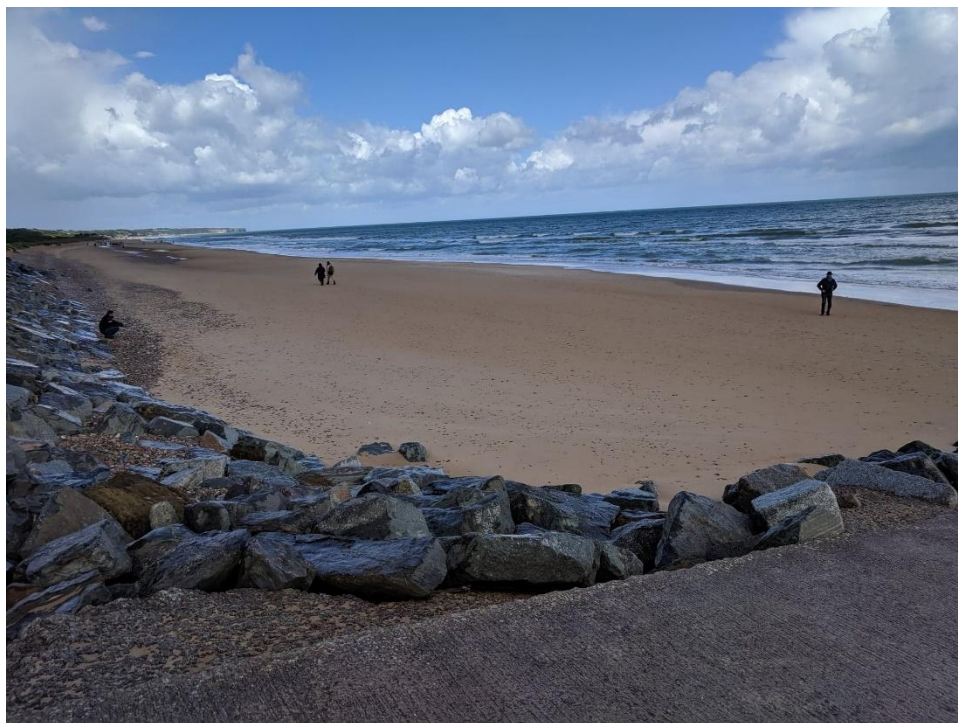
Meet Tour Guides Randy Gaulke and Markus Klauer



Randy Gaulke has been studying military history for decades as a wargamer, reenactor and battlefield visitor. In 2017 he left the corporate world and during 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 and guided tours of the WW2 battlefields since 2008. Over his life he has lived in Europe almost three years. He speaks fluent English and German and intermediate French. Randy lives in Winchester, VA, not far from the National Archives. He 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 the 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 battles of WW2, including the Ardennes, Sedan 1940, Normandy and the Seelow Heights near Berlin. Markus lives in Waterloo, Belgium, and he speaks German, English and French Fluently.



Omaha Beach is peaceful 80 years later. Photo by Laurie Gaulke.

Select Feedback from our Recent Tours

“Amazing time. Driving thru 4 countries. Great history. Seeing the terrain first hand and visualizing the experience is priceless. Fantastic way to travel Europe and experience the sacrifice of heroes. Great job guys!”

John Hiller, 2024 multi-day private tour

“Just wanted to say that this was a fantastic trip. You guys were as prepared as I have ever seen. We asked a tremendous amount of “destinations” and must see locations, and you guys killed it!! You covered three large battles and did a fantastic job in providing key stories, facts and battles in a way that we could easily follow. Thanks again for a great week.”

John Molnar, 2024 multi-day private tour

“Randy and Markus, you have both far exceeded my expectation on this trip. I have been on many tours all over the world 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, 2023 multi-day private tour



Grave marker of a fallen soldier in the Hürtgen Forest found years later

Tour Registration Form
World War 2 American Experience—28th Inf. Div. Tour
27 May – 4 June 2026 (9-days / 9-nights)

Note: Complete this form only if you are sending your registration manually!

Participants: _____ (Names and ages)

Primary Contact: _____

Address: _____

Contact Email(s): _____

Contact Phone(s): _____

Rooms Needed: _____ Double rooms _____ Single rooms

Emergency Contacts: _____

Emergency Phones: _____

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

Other Needs: _____

Signatures: _____

Remember: To complete your registration you must send: 1) signed copies of the registration form, 2) signed copies of the 2025 Terms and Conditions page 4, and 3) a \$600 per person deposit. Deposits can be paid by check, PayPal, Venmo or Zelle. Ask Randy Gaulke for payment details.

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