

Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours

**Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel
Small Group Battlefield Tour
23 – 28 September 2026 (6-days / 5-nights)**

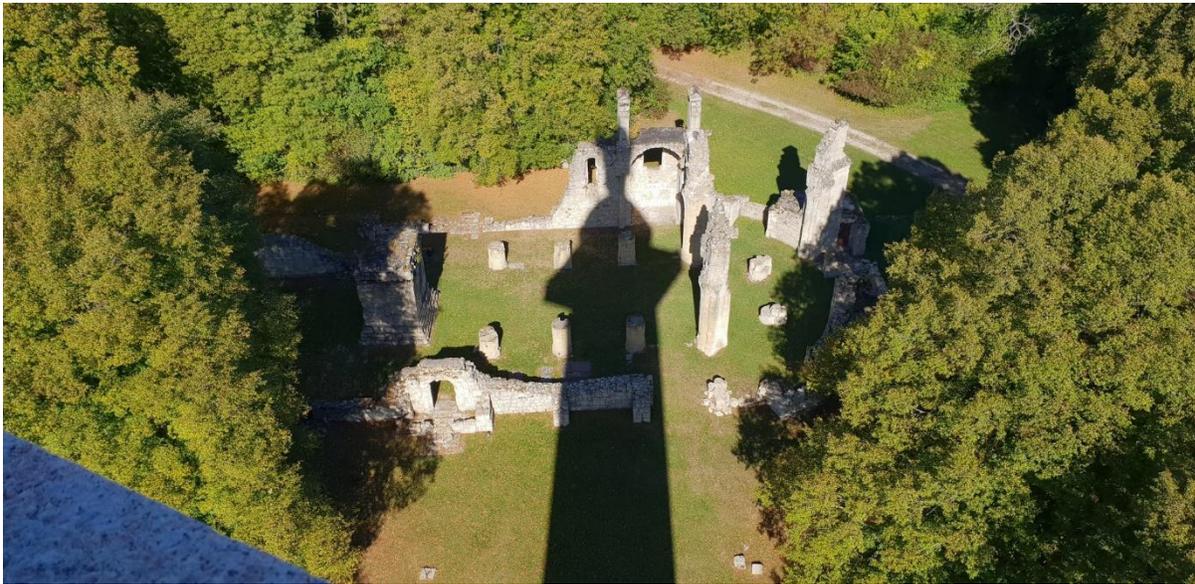


Photo of Montfaucon American Memorial and Village by Georg Snatzke

Get knee deep into history following the American Expeditionary Forces in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Offensives of late 1918. On 24 July 1918 General Pershing issued orders announcing the formation of the First American Army, effective 10 August; and in early August Generals Pershing and Foch agreed that this army should eliminate the St. Mihiel Salient. The German Supreme Command had already planned a retreat from the salient to a more defensive position, and the first German troops had started moving when the offensive began.

The rapid success of the St. Mihiel Offensive, lasting only from 12 – 16 September 1918, would give a shot in the arm to America's coalition partners and make the A.E.F. over-confident.

In late 1918 Foch ordered Allied attacks in parallel all along the Western Front to give the German Army the deathblow. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive began on 26 September, but it would not go as smoothly as the previous assault. Green troops and leaders would suffer severe casualties in the face of a skilled adversary fighting for survival on terrain that favored the defender.

Briefings during this tour will focus on the complexities of coalition war-making in late 1918, advances made by Allies on other fronts, General Pershing and other key A.E.F. leaders, and a comparison of U.S. and German casualties.

This tour is timed to coincide the 108th Anniversary of the start of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.



Top: Exploring a concrete blockhouse in cornfield just south of Montfaucon.

Middle: One participant reads the last letter written by her great uncle shortly before his death. The Cemetery is the St. Mihiel American Cemetery.

Bottom: Visiting the Henry Gunther Memorial. Photo by Dan O'Connor.



Schedule: (Subject to Modification)

Pick-up and return point for this tour will be CDG Airport. 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 an alternate location.

Day 1, Wednesday, 23 September: Pick-up at CDG at 12:00pm. Visiting select sites in the St. Mihiel Salient, including the St. Mihiel American Memorial, with a focus on the 26th and 1st Division assaults. We will visit an altarpiece attributed to 16th Century French Sculptor Ligier Richier in Hattonchâtel. Introductory dinner that evening. Hotel du Lac de Madine, Heudicourt.

Day 2, Thursday, 24 September: St. Mihiel Salient day 2. Visiting select sites on the southern flank of the salient, including the St. Mihiel American Cemetery. Hotel de Montaulbain, Verdun.

Day 3, Friday, 25 September: Meuse-Argonne day 1. Focus on III Corps and the East Bank of the Meuse. Walks will include the destroyed village of Forges and areas around Molleville Farm. We will end the day at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. Hotel de Montaulbain, Verdun.

Day 4, Saturday, 26 September: Meuse-Argonne day 2. Focus on V Corps operations, including the Meuse-Argonne American Memorial at Montfaucon. Walks will include the (German) Wiesenschlenkenstellung, Montfaucon and Nantillois to the Hindenburg Line. Hotel L'Argonn' Auberge, Apremont-sur-Aire.

Day 5, Sunday, 27 September: Meuse-Argonne day 3. Focus on I Corps, including the Lost Battalion Pocket, Le Chêne Tendu and Vauquois Hill. Hotel L'Argonn' Auberge, Apremont-sur-Aire.

Day 6, Monday, 28 September: Meuse-Argonne day 4. Continuation of I Corps positions. In the early afternoon we will depart for CDG. We expect to arrive at CDG around 17h00.



The Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel sectors are rich in areas to walk. Photo by Georg Snatzke.

Tour Overview

Tour Price (based on double occupancy)	\$2,940
Single Room Supplement	\$410

Tour Price Includes*

- TWO military historian guides 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 KDIH’s 2026 Terms and Conditions for full details.

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



The remains of Molleville Farm, where the 29th Division attacked and suffered huge casualties, photographed in early 1919.

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.
- As per the 2026 Terms and Conditions, in the event that we have fewer than six participants signed up 61 days prior to the tour, we reserve the right to cancel the tour or we can run the tour with only one guide and/or step the hotels down to high-quality two-star hotels.

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 battlefields 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.

Randy and Markus have known each other for 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 four successful tour seasons at Knee Deep Into History. 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.



Lunch in the field.

Select Feedback from our Recent Tours

“This trip is above and beyond what I anticipated. I’m so glad I found your website as your planned tour was perfect for me. My knowledge of the battlefields was next to nothing and my purpose was different from the others—to learn about where my grandfather served in WW1. You met my needs 100%.

You did a great job of assessing what all of us were looking for—the others were at a high level of WW1 history and my needs were more basic. My head was packed every day listening to all of you—very helpful for me...

Thank you for a wonderful experience. You are providing a great service for everyone and I hope you will continue for many years ahead!

I will always remember hiking through the trenches and driving through the countryside!”

Paula Colwell, 2025

“What a well-conceived and well-managed expedition! The route was efficiently planned and you provided appropriate context to make things clear when we were out of sequence. You offered the right level of detail for a general audience, while being able to discuss in more detail and bringing in the perspective of others. To a degree, we all discovered the Yankee Division together.

There were many highlights--places I’ve long wanted to see; memorable cemetery visits and wreath-layings; a feel for rural France. The group worked well together and enjoyed each other and you were the catalysts to just the right degree.

Merci beaucoup! And I hope to travel with you again.”

Andy German, 2023



Tour guide Markus Klauer explaining the St. Mihiel Offensive at the Montsec American Memorial

2026 Tour Registration Form
Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Battlefield Tour
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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 2026 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