Knee Deep Into History
Battlefield Tours

Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Battlefield Tour
23 – 28 September 2027 (6 days / 5 nights)



Members of the 2026 MASM tour exploring the remains of German trench lines.

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 with the 109th Anniversary of the start of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.



Top: Reaching the summit of the Montfaucon American Memorial. (2026)

Middle: Lunch in the field. (2022)

Bottom: Participating in the flag lowering ceremony at the St. Mihiel American Cemetery. (2025)





Itinerary: (Subject to Modifications)

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, Thursday, 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.

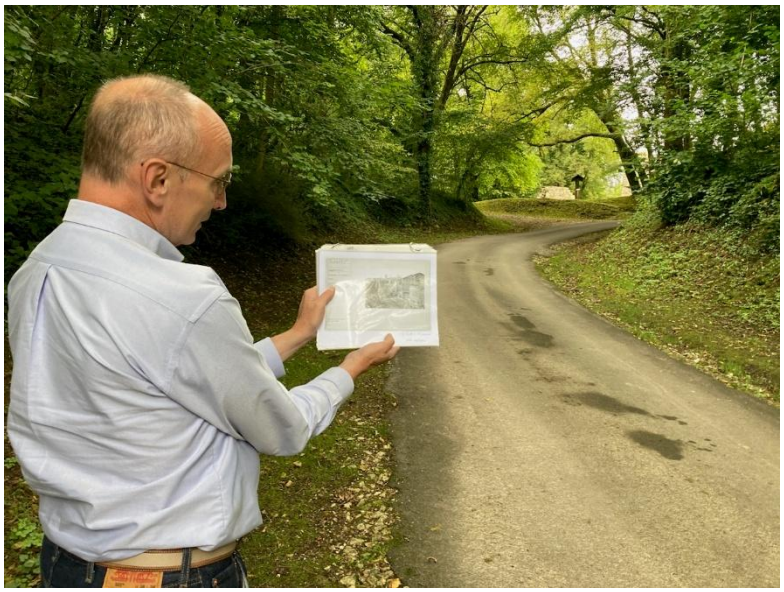
Day 2, Friday, 24 September: St. Mihiel Salient day 2. Visiting select sites on the southern flank of the salient, including the St. Mihiel American Cemetery. Hotel Lac de Madine, Heudicourt.

Day 3, Saturday, 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, Bois de Consenvoye and areas around Molleville Farm. Hotel in Verdun TBD.

Day 4, Sunday, 26 September: Meuse-Argonne day 2 and the 109th anniversary of the start of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. 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. We will also visit the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery on this anniversary date. Hotel in Verdun TBD.

Day 5, Monday, 27 September: Meuse-Argonne day 3. Focus on I Corps, including the Lost Battalion Pocket, Le Chêne Tondu and Vauquois Hill. Hotel in Verdun TBD.

Day 6, Tuesday, 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.



Montfaucon then and now photo shows how the town looked at the end of the war

Tour Overview

Tour Price (based on double occupancy)	$3,450
Single Room Supplement	$412

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 2027 Terms and Conditions for full details.

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



Visiting the remains of a German camp in the St. Mihiel Salient (2025)

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 forty 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, and
5. BRIDGE cultures.

What to Expect from a KDIH Small-Group Tour

A KDIH small-group tour offers you the opportunity to experience history and European culture in an intimate setting!

KDIH tours are designed for the real history enthusiast, which means that you will be surrounded by like-minded participants on every tour. By limiting tour size to twelve participants maximum, we maintain a low ratio of participants to guides, delivering a very different experience than a large bus with thirty participants.

The small-group tour concept is flexible and allows for itinerary modification. For example, on a 2024 Ardennes tour we had family members representing four GIs who served in different units, and we were able to visit sites of significance for each family group.

KDIH tours include walks of moderate length and duration (1-2 miles over 60-90 minutes) on many days, as walking the ground helps one gain an appreciation of the combat from a soldier's perspective. Participants concerned about walking this distance are welcome to remain with the van.

Once participants join the tour, everything is taken care of. We are generally in the field from 9:00am to somewhere around 5:00pm. Breakfast is always served at the hotel prior to departure. Lunch usually consists of sandwiches "in the field", with beverages and snacks available in the van when an afternoon pick-me-up is needed. Participants are encouraged to pack sturdy clothing for the field and to pack nicer clothing for evening meals. (Our Clothing Guidelines brochure offers good advice.)

Clients appreciate our traditional European multi-course dinners, offering participants and guides a chance to discuss the day's experiences and exchange views on critical events, leaders, etc. By selecting three-star hotel/restaurant combinations and, in some cases, in-town restaurants, we encourage participants to experience fine European dining. (Our Hotel Guidelines brochure can help travelers prepare for the differences between U.S. and traditional European hotels.)

Spouses and mature young adults are welcome, but there is limited down time for sightseeing, and it is not possible to take a day off in town when switching hotels.

Finally, KDIH tour guides are comfortable living and working in Europe, and excel at helping Americans bridge European culture. We can certainly help with problems that arise.

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 visited and guided tours of the WW2 battlefields since 2008. Over his life he has lived in Europe more than three years. He speaks fluent English and German and intermediate French. Randy lives in Winchester, VA, not far from the National Archives.

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 battlefield for decades. He has written five books in German covering WW1 and his website can be viewed at https://gb-weltriegsbuch.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.

Randy and Markus have known each other for 30+ years. Their first major collaboration was a Small-Group Battlefield Walk Tour and a Meet and Greet Dinner during the 2018 Centennial Commemoration. 2027 marks their seventh season of collaboration as Knee Deep Into History. Both share a deep love of historical research and a desire to get their clients into the field. Both understand the “other side” and both strive to present a balanced view of combat.



Night-time visit to the Montsec American Memorial in the St. Mihiel Salient

Feedback from Recent Tour Participants

"Fantastic six days of learning from an excellent guide & generous group members. The itinerary was ideal, hotels well-located and meals were a delight. Thank you for the opportunity to bring family history alive. I now know my family's WW1 veterans."

Kristy Hall

"This trip is above and beyond what I anticipated. I am 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 three 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 full every day listening to all of you—very helpful for me.

Your driving skills are excellent and it was great to have the whole package, including meals, hotel, driving. Thank you for the wonderful experience—you are providing a great service for everyone and I hope you continue for many years ahead! I will always remember hiking through the trenches and driving through the countryside!"

Paula Coldwell





"It is always a boon when your expectations of a great learning experience turn into a grand adventure with two guides who are first class historians. The two tours I took (Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel and Verdun) cleared my many uncertain opinions about the war.

How does one put a value on seeing where my uncle Bill worked all night September 25-26 carrying building materials to the Forges Swamp, and then building bridges, finished in time for the U.S. 33rd Division to do their part in the M-A Campaign?

My interest in artillery and narrow gauge railways was a cause that Markus and Randy accepted, and lead me to many interesting sites. Knee Deep Into History Tours is a wonderful military history touring venue."

Ken Baumann

2027 Tour Registration Form
Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Battlefield Tour
23 – 28 September 2027

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 2027 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