

Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours

102nd Inf. Regt. and Yankee Division Western Front Battlefield Tour 17 - 23 April 2023



Signal Corps photo 111-SC-18286. Soldiers of MG Co., 102nd Inf., 26th Div. having a bite to eat while entrenched along the roadside. Dated July 11, 1918. Taken by Pvt. C.E. Painter, S.C.

Get knee deep into the WW1 history of the 102 Infantry Regiment and Yankee Division troops! Experienced guides Randy Gaulke and Markus Klauer will share their WW1 battlefield knowledge, period photos and first-person accounts, bringing the experiences of soldiers and officers to life. Sites visited will include the caves along the Chemin des Dames, Belleau Wood and vicinity, the St. Mihiel Salient and the Meuse-Argonne. The tour will also highlight post-war reconstruction efforts in the area, including funding from wealthy New England families.

The tour will celebrate the century-long special relationship between the State of Connecticut and the French Commune of Seicheprey! It will conclude with a vin d'honneur (traditional toast) and dinner in Seicheprey, as well as a ceremony rededicating the State of Connecticut Fountain in Seicheprey (1923-2023) and renaming a local road in honor of the Yankee Division.

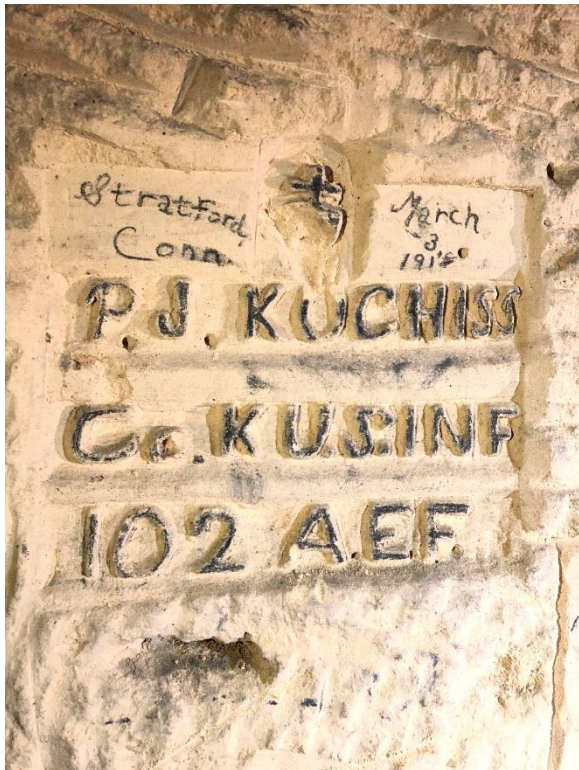
Your participation in the tour will also support the next round of the Connecticut Heritage Foundation's "Digging Into History" program. (<https://ctinworldwar1.org/dih/>) \$125 per participant plus a percentage of profit will be given to fund the program.

Sign-up today to get knee deep into history and to ensure your place on this focused battlefield tour!



L: Guide Markus Klauer explaining the St. Mihiel Offensive in 2018 at the St. Mihiel American Memorial, Montsec. Photo by Andrew Pouncey.

R: Guide Randy Gaulke searching for a grave at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, 2017. Photo by Valerie Young.



L: One of the famous cave etchings by WW1 soldiers, including men of the 102nd Infantry Regiment in the Chemins des Dames Sector, 2017. Photo by Christine Pittsley.

R: The kids of Seicheprey, France and others pose at the State of Connecticut's Fountain during Digging up History in 2019. Photo Christine Pittsley.

Schedule: (Subject to Modification)

Pick-up and return point for this tour will be Paris' 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. Because we will be moving hotels a few times on this trip, participants are discouraged from using their own vehicles. A much wiser choice is to rent a car for your private travels before or after the tour.

Day 1—Monday, 17 April. Pick-up participants at Paris CDG Airport at 12:00pm. Exploration of Château-Thierry (June 1918), including the Aisne-Marne American Memorial on Hill 204. Afternoon rest break, followed by a briefing and dinner at our hotel in Château-Thierry.

Day 2—Tuesday, 18 April. Aisne-Marne Offensive (July – August 1918), including Belleau Wood, initial Yankee Division (YD) lines replacing the 2nd Division, as well as the Yankee Division's July advance to Epieds and la Croix Rouge Farm. Today's activities will include a tour of Belleau Wood and surrounding areas by French expert guide, Gilles Lugin, a visit to the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in Belleau, the YD Memorial Church in Belleau and a Champagne tasting. Overnight stay in Château-Thierry.

Day 3—Wednesday, 19 April. Drive to Bray-en-Laonnois for a tour of the YD inscriptions in the (underground) Froidmont Quarry. This will be led by local expert Gilles Chauvin. We will then shift to an overview of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, beginning at the Pennsylvania Memorial in Varennes-en-Argonne. Sites will include the Meuse-Argonne American Memorial at Montfaucon and the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery at Romagne-sous-Montfaucon. Overnight in the Meuse-Argonne / Verdun area.

Day 4—Thursday, 20 April. Meuse-Argonne Offensive sites, continued, including where the YD fought in October – November 1918. The tour will visit the Ossuary at Verdun, one of France's most sacred places; before heading to Marchéville-en-Woëvre, where the YD did a feint attack on 26 September 1918. Overnight in the Meuse-Argonne / Verdun area.

Day 5—Friday, 21 April. Morning tour of Dragées Braquier, world-famous Verdun maker of Jordan Almonds, and shopping time in Verdun. This will be followed by the St. Mihiel Offensive exploration, starting with a hike of front-line vestiges along the Tranchée de Calonne and continuing with key sites in the St. Mihiel Salient. The tour day will end with a flag lowering ceremony at the St. Mihiel American Cemetery in Thiaucourt-Regniéville. We anticipate having the Superintendent of the cemetery present at our evening dinner. Overnight in the St. Mihiel area.

Day 6—Saturday, 22 April. St. Mihiel Offensive continued, with a special focus on the 102nd Inf. Regt. at Seicheprey and other regimental training areas. We will have a brief break at the hotel in the mid-afternoon, followed by the **Rededication Vin d'Honneur and Dinner in Seicheprey**. Overnight in the St. Mihiel area.

Day 7—Sunday, 23 April. **Seicheprey Fountain Rededication and Street Renaming Ceremony**. Late afternoon bus departure to CDG Airport. We anticipate arriving at CDG around 7:00pm. **The tour ends when we arrive at CDG airport.**

IMPORTANT: TOUR PARTICIPANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BOOKING AND PAYING FOR THEIR OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS FOR THE EVENING OF DAY 7. There are several hotels near the airport to choose from, or you can take Paris' RER (Réseau Express Régional) train or cab into the city. Most international departures leave CDG in the late morning.



Tour guide Randy Gaulke helping clients “see” the battlefield by lining up “then” photos, 2018. Photo by Dave Gaddis.

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.

With that introduction, we understand that our Connecticut tour clients might have a wide range of physical abilities. Therefore, we will endeavor to arrange alternative activities that are less physically demanding.



Markus getting clients knee deep into history in the woods along the Tranchée de Calonne during the 2021 Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Tour. We’re typically in the field rain or shine.

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 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. Randy 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 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. Markus lives in Lille, France and he speaks German, English and French fluently.

Randy and Markus have known each other for nearly 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 successful 2021 and 2022 Knee Deep Into History tour seasons. 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.



Select Feedback (more at <https://kneedeepintohistory.com>)

“Randy and Markus, I am delighted to hear that you both will be focusing on the 26th Yankee Division, especially the 102nd Infantry Regiment, the fellow battle group to my father’s 104th Inf. Regt. Your combined knowledge and experience in the location of the 26th Yankee Division covered will bring a level of interest to the tour participants that they will never forget.

I appreciate you both for the time we spent in the caves in Braye-en-Laonnois. So much time and history of the occupation of the caves by the 102nd Inf. Regt. that awaits the tour will only be enhanced by the experience you both bring.

I can personally attest to the relationships and respect you both have with local historians and onsite preservationists. The tour participants will always remember “Knee Deep Into History.” ***Bruce Blanchart, son of a WW1 YD soldier, who toured with Randy and Markus in 2017 and 2018.***

“Markus and Randy, thanks for the “all-in” experience throughout this week. I appreciate your attention to detail and kindness as you’ve led us through history, mud, rain, sun and time. History has come alive in new ways as we journeyed above and below ground...” *Carl Priest, 2021 Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Tour.*

“This was a wonderful educational experience for me as I came with very limited background on WW1. Markus and Randy found a balance in giving me the rich overview of the battlefield without going into depth that would have left me confused. A highlight of the trip for me was the leadership of Markus and Randy. They work so well together, and it was evident that they enjoy working together. Their interaction and humor added so much to the trip and made this a wonderful and educational experience for me...” *Lyle Thorpe, 2021 Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Tour.*

General Tour Format—What can you Expect from this KDIH Tour?

- Your tour guides on the trip will be Randy Gaulke and German historian Markus Klauer.
- Clients will be picked up and returned to France’s CDG airport, as outlined elsewhere.
 - 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 needs.
 - Because of the number of participants, we anticipate using a motor coach.
- 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.
- For most of the days participants should expect to be “in the field” from 9:00am to somewhere around 5:00pm, regardless of weather. This will be followed by a short rest break and dinner starting around 7:30pm.
 - 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.
 - On days that we are not switching hotels clients could opt to skip one day of touring and remain at the hotel.
 - We are scheduling a few non-military cultural items in this tour as well as a few hours of shopping time.
- Regarding meals:
 - Continental breakfast will be served at the hotel.
 - Modest sandwich lunches (with wonderful European bread) will generally be eaten “in the field” to conserve time.
 - Snacks of water, soda, fruit and sweets will be available for free in the tour vehicle.
 - Depending on the schedule and other factors, we will sometimes stop for coffee in a local café.
 - Multi-course dinners will generally start at the hotel restaurant around 7:30pm.
 - 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) dinners or lunches specifically excluded and 3) souvenirs.
 - When comparing prices, note that other tour companies have a lot of meals “on your own.”
 - Transportation costs, including airfare, to and from the CDG airport start- and end-point is not included.
 - Also, the tour price does NOT include any lodging for the night of 23 April. Participants are responsible to select and pay for their hotel on that night.
- We will be visiting key American Battle Monuments Commission Cemeteries and Memorials as well as German (and other national) military cemeteries and memorials in the area.



Cultural Stop in Hattonchâtel: Altar by sculptor Ligier Richier dating from 1523

Pricing and Payment Details:

- The price is \$2,275.
- Single supplement please add \$432.
- An initial deposit of \$600 is required to hold your reservation, with the balance due 17 January, 2023 (90 days prior to departure.)
- Both the initial deposit and the balance can be paid by check or via PayPal invoice to kneedeepintohistory@gmail.com.

Terms and Conditions:

- Please review our separate Seicheprey 2023 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 Hotels:

- We anticipate staying at the high quality, three-star hotels that generally include a restaurant, reducing the need to travel for dinner.
- As stated in our Terms and Conditions, the hotel is subject to change due to unforeseen events.

Cultural Events:

- We endeavor to organize cultural events for every Knee Deep Into History tour. Events for this tour, will include a champagne tasting, a visit to world-famous Verdun candy maker Dragées Braquier, a visit to a church containing an altar piece sculpted by Ligier Richier dating to 1523 A.D. as well as the town of Seicheprey's commemoration ceremony.

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.

2023 Seicheprey Fountain and Yankee Division Tour Registration Form

17 – 23 April 2023

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 Seicheprey 2023 Terms and Conditions page 4 and 3) a \$600 per-person deposit for each participant.

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