

Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours

**110th Anniversary of Verdun and the Somme
Small Group Battlefield Tour
28 June – 2 July (5-days / 4-nights)**



Photo of Fort Douaumont by Valerie Young



1916 would epitomize the war of attrition brought about by trench warfare on the Western Front. Battles would last for months. Millions of shells would be fired. Casualties would be counted in the hundreds of thousands, and relatively little ground would be gained, leaving neither side closer to a breakthrough or victory.

Get Knee Deep Into History as we examine the two greatest battles of 1916: Verdun and the Somme. We will start with a two-day look at Verdun, including the West Bank of the Meuse River. More than 500 kilometers of trenches, countless monuments, dozens of fortresses and concrete structures exist to this day. With the reconciliation summit of Kohl and Mitterand in September 1984, Verdun today stands as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation.

We will then travel to the Somme for three days, beginning with the various jump-off lines and expanding to other key sites of the five-month battle. **On 1 July, we will participate in the 110th Anniversary Commemorations at the Lochnagar Crater and at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.**

Learn about the leaders and their strategies as well as the suffering of the individual soldiers in this in-depth look at these two 1916 battles.



Top: A March 2024 commemoration on Mort Homme attended by guides Klauer and Gaulke. Photo by Markus Paulick.

Middle: 1 July 2017 remembrance ceremony at Fricourt German Cemetery on the Somme.

Bottom: One of the scores of Commonwealth cemeteries dotting the landscape of the Somme.



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, Sunday, 28 June: Pick up at CDG at 11:00am. Drive to Verdun. Focus on the East Bank of the Meuse River, starting with the fighting for the Caures Forest, Fort Douaumont, Fleury and the Vaux ravine. Time permitting, move to the battlefields on the western banks of the Meuse River: the Mort Homme and Cote 304. Hotel in Verdun, TBD.

Day 2, Monday, 29 June: Continuation of the Verdun battlefields, including a look at the German hinterland, one heavy artillery firing position and the Camp Marguerre, a German experimental concrete factory site. Afternoon drive to St. Quentin. Hotel in St. Quentin, TBD.

Day 3, Tuesday, 30 June: Starting with the Somme battlefields, we will visit various jump-off lines from 1 July, Beaumont Hamel and Lochnagar Crater and follow the battle's progression. Hotel on the Somme, TBD.

Day 4, Wednesday, 1 July: Participation in certain Somme Battle commemorations, starting with the early morning remembrance ceremony at the Lochnagar Crater and the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing. (We need to be on-site at Lochnagar before 7:00am. Whistle blows at 7:28. I believe the Thiepval ceremony begins at 12:00pm. If there is interest, there is also a late afternoon commemoration at Fricourt German Cemetery.)

Continuation of the Somme battle including the fighting around Delville Wood. Then we will focus on some portions of the French fighting such as Belloy-en-Santerre, where French Foreign Legion soldier and poet, Alan Seeger, died on 4 July 1916. Hotel on the Somme, TBD.

Day 5, Thursday, 2 July: Continuation of Somme sites not yet visited. Early afternoon drive back to CDG. We anticipate arriving at CDG around 3:00pm and the tour ends at that time.

Participants are responsible for their own lodging arrangements or further travel after the end of the tour. Options include: booking a hotel near the airport, booking a hotel in Paris and taking a train or taxi to the hotel, or traveling further via rental car or train.



Toter Mann / Mort Homme Memorial

Tour Overview

Tour Price (based on double occupancy)	\$2,550
Single Room Supplement	\$340

Tour Price Includes*

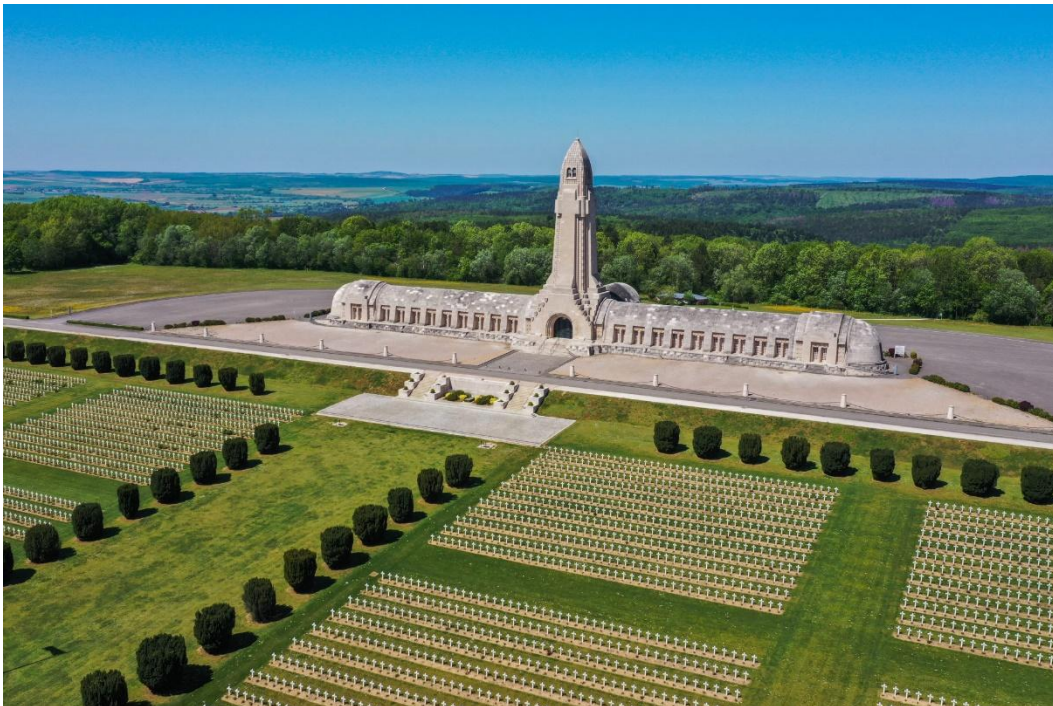
- TWO military historian guides who understand both sides of the story and who speak multiple languages and understand European culture
 - Local guides at specific sites as needed
- 3-Star accommodations, typically in European family-owned hotel / restaurants
- Transportation typically in comfortable 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 Ossuaire at Douaumont is one of the most evocative places on the Western Front.

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 successful Knee Deep Into History tour seasons in 2021-24. 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.



Markus Klauer receiving a Bronze Medal from the City of Verdun for his preservation efforts with the French National Forest Office (ONF).

Select Feedback from our Recent Tours

“Had a great time. Randy and Markus were tremendous and tolerated our sarcasm and one-liners. They picked excellent hotels, restaurants, and were very accommodating when we needed to take a stop/break. I appreciated their preparedness and organization which allowed us to maximize our time on seeing the important sites that we didn't want to miss. I would highly recommend Randy & Markus and look forward to booking a future trip.”

David DiSalvo, 2024

“Thank you for the most excellent WWI tour! I particularly enjoyed the roadside chats with several accounts, photos and maps. Your knowledge is freely given and its helpful to have the German perspective. It's fun to see the humor you share together. I hope to see you again soon on the battlefield.”

Jacque Knight, 2023

“We have dreamt of visiting the WWI battlefields ever since we saw Randy speak at the Hoboken Museum for the 100th anniversary. Knee Deep in History delivered a 5-star experience that made my husband's birthday one he will never forget. With Markus's expertise and knowledge of the terrain, we were able to visit sites, see relics, and hear stories that brough history to life...”

Melody Miller, 2024



Trench remains at Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Park. Photo by Dave Gaddis

2026 Tour Registration Form
110th Anniversary of Verdun and the Somme Tour
29 June – 3 July (5 days / 4 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 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:

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kneedeepintohistory@gmail.com 908.451.0252