

Coming in 2017...

Tours of the WW1 American and Verdun Battlefields

Led by Randal Gaulke



Visiting and walking the battlefields of World War I brings history to life in a way that one cannot get from reading books, watching movies, or using modern technology such as Google Earth!

Whether you and your family are retracing the steps of a relative, are serious students of military history, or are just considering a unique day trip out of Paris, let Randal put his knowledge of history, the region and French culture to work for you. Larger groups can also be easily accommodated.

Who is Randal Gaulke?

Randal is a WW1 battlefield tour guide, historian and reenactor. He took his first battlefield tour in 1986 with Lt. Col. Graham Parker of Flanders Tours. In 1994 he fell in love with the Meuse-Argonne region of France while participating in a work weekend with members of the German Remembrance Committee of the Argonne Forest. Since that trip he has focused on the Meuse-Argonne, Verdun and St. Mihiel battlefields; and he has returned to those battlefields almost annually since 1994—sometimes leading tours and other times conducting research.

Randal understands and appreciates the importance that language, culture and regional knowledge play in making a successful battlefield trip. He has built friendships with many locals and European historians over the years. Also, his research and knowledge of the German Army provides a view of the war from the other side.

Randal spent a year in Hamburg, Germany as a Fulbright Scholar and he plans to spend much of 2017 in France.

Why Hire Randal Gaulke?

- ☑ Randal has been studying the American battles of WW1, especially the Meuse-Argonne, for more than two decades; he loves telling the story of these battles. (He has also led groups on the Verdun and St. Mihiel battlefields.)
- ☑ He loves researching individuals and units; helping families retrace their ancestor's steps.
- ☑ Randal knows these battlefields intimately: He has visited them almost annually since 1994.
- ☑ He understands the German side of the story: much of his research has focused on the German forces.
- ☑ He understands and is comfortable in French culture; this will make your group feel more comfortable in new surroundings.
- ☑ Randal speaks three languages: French (proficiently), German (fluently) and English.
- ☑ He will tailor your tour to meet the interest level and needs of your party.
- ☑ Randal can guide a small group to sites not accessible by large bus tours.
- ☑ His knowledge of the region will save your group time and aggravation.



Randal and son photographing a German semaphore position in the Argonne Forest. (Photo by Wim Degrande)

Where can I find more Information?

Randal maintains a website, <http://meuse-argonne.com> as well as a public Facebook Group named Meuse-Argonne.com. Randal's CV can be found in the Features/Meet the Author section of the website.

Please Note: Because of employer sensitivities, the website does not yet advertise the tour service.

Contact him for a Free Consultation

Putting together a successful and enjoyable battlefield tour requires several items: 1) Knowledge of military history, 2) knowledge of the region, 3) local contacts, and 4) some knowledge of the language. Randal brings all of these to the table. Take the next step: Contact Randal to discuss your travel plans, group composition, interest level, etc.

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Endorsements from Past Tour Participants

I participated in the 2007 Western Front Association – US Branch battlefield tour. This was conducted by a British battlefield tour company with Randy leading the parts of the tour that covered the American battles of St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne. Randy is knowledgeable, invariably well-organized, and very effective and personable even when leading groups of know-it-alls like my friends and me. Our tour group that year had been the largest he had ever taken on these battlefields to date and yet his guiding was comparable to that of the well-established and well-known British guides who led the other half of the tour.

Steve Suddaby

Past President, World War One Historical Association



I've known Randy since 1998 when we were on US Branch Western Front Association's first battlefield tour, Randy helped organize that. I have made 15 trips to Great War battlefields in Belgium, France, Italy, Turkey, Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, Macedonia and Bulgaria. I organized and attended five trips for US Branch WFA including the 2007 trip when he was the guide for Meuse Argonne and St. Mihiel.

He knows those battlefields better than anyone I've known; and I've been there multiple times with good guides. He is friends with locals speaks French and German and has great people skills. I highly recommend him!

Paul Guthrie

Director, World War One Historical Association

Randal Gaulke's passion for and knowledge of the Meuse-Argonne Front is second to none in North America. Even in France I've only encountered a handful of Europeans who can approach his level of expertise. But it was his dedication and preparation that truly made the difference in a successful overseas journey.

Randy makes the tour personal and functional for every individual. He prepared a detailed catalog of our trip in advance with a complete itinerary and historical information on each site for our 1993 tour. His advance plans included walking time at each site, consideration for the intensity and physical demands of any hiking as it pertained to the capabilities of each member of our party, as well as transportation and food.

His linguistic skills were more than sufficient to minimize and solve all of the hiccups that are inevitable in international travel. We truly felt like we were in good hands during our entire trip.

This resulted not only in an educational tour, but an enjoyable tour that I would gladly repeat.

Stephen Skinner

**Author, *THE STAND: The Final Flight of Lt. Frank Luke, Jr.*
Indianapolis IN USA**



I traveled on a tour Randy organized for a group of us in 2005. On this journey we followed a WW1 German cavalry unit, the 8th Kurassier. Randy took us from Koln, Germany, where they originated; to Helly ravine, Verdun, where they fought in the battle for Fort Douaumont. Along the way we stayed in small local hotels, saw places significant to the Kurassier, met with veterans who maintained a museum of the 8th Kurassier, and saw such amazing places as the Romagne 14-18 museum (look it up, it is a special place.)

Randy has a passion for WW1, and his extensive time in Europe has built him an extensive knowledge not only of the history of the area, but a connection with many local people. We were immersed in the history we explored. A trip with Randy is a well rounded experience that I doubt you will find anywhere else.

Eric "Merlin" Hanson

8th Kürassier Regiment (Reenacting Group)



It is without any reservations that I can highly recommend Mr. Randal Gaulke as a battlefield guide. His thorough, meticulous approach to research allows him to clearly present not only a broad, general overview to a particular battle, but also a more in depth analysis and description of the actions which transpired on a particular location or for a specific military unit involved in the battle. This trait, combined with his ability to analyze and interpret the nature and impact of the terrain on the action, makes for a very enjoyable and informative tour. On a recent trip to France, Mr. Gaulke was able to provide me with an insightful tour of the Verdun battlefield in which he traced the movement of my relative's regiment (IR87) during the 1916 campaign. His commitment to excellence and in going above and beyond what one normally encounters from many battlefield guides was clearly demonstrated by his research into the location of IR87 in June, 1918 where he was able to show me the area where my relative was killed. I know of no other individual who can provide you with a battlefield tour experience as Mr. Randal Gaulke, and highly recommend him.

Dr. Robert J. Fryman