



1918-19 Meuse-Argonne Reconstruction / Occupation of Germany Small Group Battlefield Tour 15 - 20 September, 2019



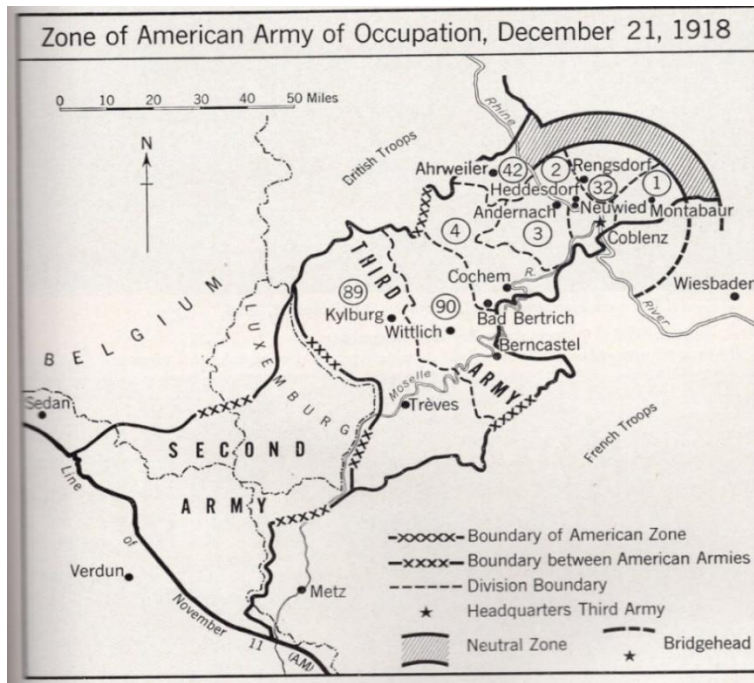
The War was Over, but Many in the AEF Would Remain in Europe for Months or Years...

After more than four years of trench warfare, the towns in the Meuse-Argonne region were in shambles. Complete villages had been destroyed. Others were badly damaged, and four years of combat and shelling left the region littered with dead bodies, instruments of war and unexploded ordnance. All of this had to be addressed starting in late 1918.

The terms of the Armistice gave the defeated Imperial German Army only fourteen days to evacuate from the invaded countries, and only another sixteen days to evacuate the West Bank of the Rhein (Rhine) River and three 30-kilometer long bridgeheads on the East Bank of the Rhein—Köln, Mainz and Koblenz. By Christmas 1918, eight AEF divisions would be stationed in Germany. American forces would remain in Germany until 1923.

This tour will focus on the last phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the immediate-post war period, and the American Zone of Occupation in Germany. For spouses and participants alike, it will also focus on the sights and culture of the Mosel and Rhein River Valleys. This is one of the most beautiful and historic regions in Germany and Germany's major wine producing region.

With sufficient advance notice, we can tailor this small-group tour to allow participants to walk in their ancestor's footsteps. Please advise us as soon as possible.



Schedule (Subject to Modification):

Saturday, 14 Sept.—Arrival in France and travel to meeting point. See below.

Note: Markus and Randy will be available to pick participants up and drop them off at the Meuse TGV Gare. However, they WILL NOT be available to ferry participants to and from CDG or other airports.

Day 1—Sunday, 15 Sept.—Meet at 09h00 at the Hotel du Commerce, Aubréville, France
 Focus on the final phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and post-war reconstruction
 Stay overnight at Hotel du Commerce, Aubréville

Day 2—Monday, 16 Sept.—Focus on the final phase of the Offensive and post-war reconstruction
 Stay overnight at Hotel du Commerce, Aubréville

Day 3—Tuesday, 17 Sept.—Drive to Trier
 Highlights include a stop at the Luxembourg American Military Cemetery (WW2) and Roman ruins in Trier
 Stay overnight at Hotel TBD

Day 4—Wednesday, 18 Sept.—Drive to Koblenz and surrounding towns
 Will include a late afternoon wine tasting at one or more of the region’s many wine producers
 Stay overnight at Hotel TBD

Day 5—Thursday, 19 Sept.—Koblenz and surrounding towns
 Stay overnight at Hotel TBD

Day 6—Friday, 20 Sept.—AM, Koblenz and surrounding towns; PM, return to Aubréville
 Stay overnight at Hotel du Commerce or return to Paris or other destination

Saturday, 21 Sept.—Return to Paris or depart for other destinations. No program this day.

Topics Covered will Include:

Final Phase of Meuse-Argonne Offensive
AEF Race for Sedan
Beginning of Battlefield Tourism
Explosives Removal
AEF Christmas in Germany

November 1918 Meuse River Crossings
Zone Rouge
Reconstruction in the Meuse-Argonne
Establishment of the AEF and Other Cemeteries
From Armistice to Versailles

Format:

- This small-group tour is designed to enable **maximum interaction** between participants and guides.
 - The tour is limited to a maximum of eighteen participants plus the two tour guides.
- Except for coverage of the last phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, this tour will focus less on battlefields and more on the reconstruction in France and the occupation of Germany by A.E.F. troops.
- Participants should expect to be visiting sites from 09h00 to between 17h00 and 18h00, regardless of weather.
- Meals:
 - Breakfast is generally included in your hotel booking in France and Germany, although you may pay extra for it.
 - Lunch will generally be eaten “in the field” to conserve time.
 - Dinners will generally be eaten at the hotel restaurant to encourage interaction. However, participants are free to explore other dinner options, if they arrange their own transportation.
- During the Germany portion of the tour, we will be organizing a wine tasting or two; and we will be visiting cultural sites such as the Roman ruins around Trier, Deutsches Eck in Koblenz, the quaint “Altstadt” portion of Koblenz and some of the many beautiful villages in the Mosel River Valley.
 - This deep valley, with its vineyard-laden hills, truly is one of the most beautiful regions of Germany.
 - For this reason, the tour is more spouse-friendly than the typical battlefield tour, and will not include our typical long battlefield hikes.
- Military sites to be included will be the Luxembourg American Military Cemetery (WW2), the Wehrtechnische Studiensammlung in Koblenz, an excellent military museum, and Festung Ehrenbreitstein, which served as the American Army’s headquarters in Germany.
- The tour is limited to five cars maximum—including the two driven by Randy and Markus.
 - A larger car caravan becomes too unwieldy.
 - Randy and Markus have room for three passengers each; or a total of six passengers.
 - We choose to do this tour via cars because EU regulations for coach drivers place additional logistical complexities to the tour, such as required rest periods during the day and a maximum number of consecutive days of driving.
 - Please indicate on the response form if you are willing to be a driver. This tour only works well if we have a few additional drivers.

Pricing and Payment Details:

- The price of this six-day tour is €900—or €150 per day per person. Participants must sign up for the entire 6-day tour; you will not be able to join for just a day or two. The price covers only the guide services of Randy Gaulke and Markus Klauer.
 - It does NOT cover transportation to the meeting point, hotels, food, gasoline, and incidental costs.
- **If we have MORE than ten participants, we will reduce the price to €750 Euros—or €125 per day—and we will refund the balance.**
- It is easiest to pay via PayPal using the email address lavarennnes@meuse-argonne.com.
 - **Please make sure to designate the payment currency as Euros.**

Lodging:

- Because we are not traditional tour guides, we ask participants to make their own room reservations at the hotels we select.
- We will have a reserved block of rooms at each hotel. Once we receive your payment, we will send you the booking code needed to make your reservation.
- At the time of this printing, we have not finalized hotels in Germany, but we anticipate booking at two to three-star hotels with an average room rate of €80 - €110 per night.
 - In France, we will be lodging at the Hotel du Commerce in Aubréville: <http://www.hotel-restaurant-aubreville.com/>
 - Our selection in Germany is TBD

Refunds and Cancellation Policy:

- The tour requires a minimum of six participants.
 - If we do not have six paid participants by **30 APRIL 2019**, we will cancel the tour and refund your payment, less any PayPal transaction fees.
 - **For this reason, we caution you about booking non-refundable airfare prior to that date.**
- If you need to cancel after 30 April, your refund will be as follows:
 - Cancel on or before 30 June: 75% refund, 25% penalty
 - Cancel between 1 July and 31 August: 50% refund, 50% penalty
 - Cancel after 31 August: 25% refund, 75% penalty

Insurance:

- This is a small group tour offered by two experienced tour guides, not a large travel company.
- Participants are strongly encouraged to obtain tour interruption / cancellation and medical insurance that meets their needs.



Signal Corps Photo #40659, showing an American sentry looking at the Statue of Wilhelm I at Deutsches Eck, Koblenz

Meet Tour Guides, Randy Gaulke and Markus Klauer:

Until early 2017, Randy Gaulke worked as a high-yield bond analyst in New York City, traveling to the Meuse-Argonne for nearly every year since 1986. He left this career to pursue his WW1 passion, and he lived and worked eight months in France in 2017-18 as a freelance guide to the WW1 battlefields. He also maintains a website, <https://meuse-argonne.com> and the FB Group Meuse-Argonne.com. Randy lives in Gillette, NJ and speaks English and German fluently. He is becoming more proficient in French.

Until early 2018, Markus Klauer was a Captain in the German Army (Bundeswehr). Like Randy, Markus has been a passionate student of WW1 history for over three decades, and he has guided countless German, French and American groups on the battlefields. He has written five books on the subject in German, which can be viewed on his website, <http://www.weltkriegsbuch.de/pages/index2.htm>. He lives in Lille, France, and speaks German, English and French fluently.



Markus and Randy Meeting on the Somme, July 2017

Randy and Markus first met in France in 1994—twenty-five years ago—and they have continued to meet on the battlefield every few years since then. Both share a deep love of historical research and a desire to get their clients out of museums and into the field. This tour will emphasize both of those skills as they “show” their clients the Meuse-Argonne immediately post-war and the AEF occupation of Germany.

In September 2018 they organized a Small-Group Battlefield Walk Series: Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel, that was very well received by tour participants.

Feedback from 2018 Small-Group Battlefield Walk Series:

“Randy and Markus, Thanks for a great tour experience. Well-chosen sites, good discussions in the field, great personal experiences—well done all around. I personally saw parts of the Meuse-Argonne in a completely different light, and so learned a lot.” John Snow, OK.

“These guys are the best. They truly walk you in the soldiers’ steps. My teenage son and I feel so lucky that we were able to have them as our guides. They provide you with such a deeper understanding than any book or general tour.” Matt and Grant Treaster, KS.

“Dear Randy, Thanks for going the extra mile to gain access to the farm road for the 315th Infantry walk from Nantillois to Madeleine Farm. It has helped complete the journey in my grandfather’s footsteps...” Valerie Young, NY.

“Another year, new wonderful things to see—to learn. You are an educator – guide – and passionate leader of WW1 knowledge. Your passion and knowledge for the subject is becoming more evident to everyone. It means new travelers, but your contacts have grown and that benefits your opportunities and those like me who want to know more. You are also very accommodating, as you make it possible for each person to find what they are looking for...” Andrew Pouncey, TN.

“...your knowledge and great passion inspires. Thanks for helping me to connect to the American group—an aspect of WW1 you know I’m very enthusiastic about. Your organization was cool to enable great flexibility amongst people with a range of interests and great camaraderie resulted. I learnt tons and enjoy getting insight into the on-the-ground research you do. The detail appeals to me and it fits so well with my own project...” Andrew Mullen, UK.

“Thanks for the wonderful tours of incredible ‘fields of mighty memory.’ It’s obvious you really know the battlefields here. The then and now photos were great! Your website is a veritable wealth of information on all related topics to WW1 tourism here...” Dave Gaddis, WA.

Registration Form

Participant Name(s): _____

Primary Contact: _____

Contact Email: _____

Contact Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Emergency Phone: _____

Participants' Ages: _____

Health Considerations:
(if any) _____

Other Concerns: _____

Willing to Drive: Yes? No? Please circle

Will you need transport to Meuse TGV Station: Beginning End Both Please circle

Please mail / email / text a copy of this form to:

Randy Gaulke, 584 Valley Road, Gillette, NJ 07933 lavarennnes@meuse-argonne.com 908.451.0252

The easiest method of payment is via PayPal to lavarennnes@meuse-argonne.com.

Be sure to select Euros as the payment currency.

If you do not wish to pay via PayPal, please contact Randy Gaulke for alternatives.

Remember: We will send you the booking codes needed to book your rooms after we receive your payment.