

# Griffin Group Photo Archive User Guide

Dear Purchaser,

Many thanks for purchasing this unique collection of WW1 AEF battlefield photos. These high-quality photographs were taken by U.S. Signal Corps photographers in early 1919—just months after the end of the war. They will enable you to “see” the AEF battlefields on the Western Front differently.

In preparing this collection I have tried to stick with the following naming convention:

[Number	Description	Location	Date]
CH27-02	Barton’s Hill	265.0 – 284.4	26-1-19

An “x” has been used where details are illegible. Unfortunately, there are some photos where significant portions of the captions are not legible. For example: SM24-26 xxxxx 354.95 – 231.8 x-xx-xx.

The Number [CH27-02] is designed as follows:

The photographers used the following geographic designations:

AM	Argonne-Meuse
AS	Alsace
BM	Belgium (but it includes Cantigny too)
CH	Champagne (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 36 <sup>th</sup> Divisions)
CT	Chateau-Thierry
SM	St. Mihiel

I have also added a [-division number] which indicates which division’s battlefields were being visited by the photographer and his guide. This is a bit confusing, because multiple divisions spent time on the same battlefields. A classic example of this is in the Champagne Region: CH27-02 and CH27-36 are the same photo, showing Barton’s Hill in the Champagne Region. Another example is the fact that the 28<sup>th</sup>, 78<sup>th</sup> and 77<sup>th</sup> Divisions shared much the same space in the Meuse-Argonne; but at various times. Some photos in Varennes are classified -28 and some are -78.

The location [xxx.x – xxx.x] gives the longitude and latitude of the photo’s location—**using the same coordinates used on the ABMC Summary of Operations Maps! This makes finding the location of the photograph easier!!** Most photos also have an arrow showing the photographer’s compass facing. *Nevertheless, one still needs a critical eye; because locations were not always re-built to pre-war specification, or the original buildings no longer exist.*

*In using these photographs for battlefield tours, I have generally found that the photographers were not too adventuresome. Most of the photos seem to have been taken just off the road / walk path.*

The Date [xx-xx-xx] is used as the photographer printed it on the photo: Some photographers used the European format [day-month-year], others used the U.S. format [month-day-year]. Basically, all photos were taken between January and May 1919.

Unfortunately, not all photos had all information in the caption. Locations and/or dates are often missing.

**For those of you concerned about citing sources of your work: The Griffin Group Photos are record group 120-G at the National Archives, College Park, MD. (Please consult the MLA Manual or similar scholarly work for a better citation.) I would also appreciate a comment such as: “via Meuse-Argonne.com” in your publication.**

**One more note: While it is tempting to make free copies of these photos for your friends, please bear in mind that I spent seven days at NARA scanning and many, many more hours cropping and organizing this collection.**

So, enjoy watching the AEF battlefields of the Western Front come to life as you make your way through this beautiful collection of photos!!!

Randy Gaulke

[lavarenes@meuse-argonne.com](mailto:lavarenes@meuse-argonne.com)

<https://meuse-argonne.com>