

# Remembering World War I in France

*with Dr. Keith Huxen*

May 17–25, 2027 | September 20–28, 2027



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**Among the most moving travel experiences one can have is visiting France's many locations that comprised the epicenter of World War I. With our exclusive tour led by a military history expert, walking on the same hallowed ground and taking in the same vistas as the millions of soldiers throughout the Great War provides a deeper insight into how this tragic event shaped the modern world.** This remarkable tour covers key battlefield sites of the Great War across France, plus associated memorials, cemeteries, and museums. Beginning in the city of Ypres on the Somme—which saw the arrival of Allied soldiers in 1914 and stood at the center of so many important battles—your tour also includes stops at Vimy Ridge, the preserved trenches at Apremont la Forêt, Fort la Pompelle, the long-contested region of Alsace-Lorraine, the Argonne Forest, and more. In addition to commentary from your accompanying military history expert, battlefield and site visits are complemented by local guides and tours in various cities so you can take in history both as it was and through the lens of today.

# Your Journey Expert



**Dr. Keith Huxen** is the Senior Historian at the Henry Jackson Foundation working in support of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). After joining the Partnership and Innovation (PI) Directorate as a Project Officer in July 2020, he was promoted to Senior Historian in October 2023. His responsibilities include coordinating research with other staff historians, the Korean War Oral History Project, and other research projects in the Hub & Spoke Program of the PI Directorate to support DPAA's mission to provide the fullest possible accounting of fallen American service members from World War II to the present, and if possible to locate, identify, and repatriate the remains of the fallen to their loved ones at home. Previously as the Senior Director of Research and History at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, LA from 2011-2020, he managed and directed the museum's oral history program and a staff of seven historians. The oral history collection better than doubled to nearly 10,000 under his tenure, and many interviews are featured in the museum's permanent exhibits. He was the institutional historian engaged in the planning, design, creation, and construction of exhibits in the US Freedom Pavilion: the Boeing Center, the Road to Berlin, the Road to Tokyo, and the Arsenal of Democracy permanent exhibit galleries, and he was the curator for the special exhibit Manufacturing Victory. Dr. Huxen created an original lecture course designed for lifelong learners, "World War II: Up Close and Personal," released by The Great Courses Plus (formerly Wondrium) in July 2021. In June 2024, Dr. Huxen served as a Smithsonian Journeys Expert, leading travelers through WWII sites in the U.K. and France for the Smithsonian's 80th Anniversary Tour of the D-Day Landings in Normandy. He has led tours and lectured at World War II battle and historical sites in Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Poland, China, and Taiwan. Dr. Huxen holds a PhD degree in American history from George Washington University, specializing in the diplomatic, military, and international history of the twentieth century. He has taught at Arizona State University, the University of New Orleans, and Louisiana State University.

## Highlights

- Walk the most significant and bloodiest battlefields of World War I, from the Somme to the Marne to Verdun with a Great Courses military history scholar.
- Stay in Ypres and Reims—two cities whose stunning medieval architectural treasures were badly damaged during the war but have been restored to their earlier splendor.
- Learn the lessons of the War to End All Wars through visits to key museums, including the Musée de la Grande Guerre.
- Explore the Champagne region of France, including a cellar tour to see how this iconic export is made.



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## Itinerary



### Day 1: Beginning With the End

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After you arrive in Paris and meet your fellow travelers, transfer by private coach to Ypres, Belgium, for the start of your journey. En route, visit the reconstructed railroad car in the woods of Compiègne, France, where the armistice to end World War I was signed. This is the same rail car used in 1940 for the armistice signed between Nazi Germany and France. Arrive in Ypres in time to enjoy a welcome reception and dinner at the hotel with opening remarks from your expert.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Ariane

**Included Meal:** Dinner

### Day 2: Battle of Ypres

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Ypres, meaning “Leper” in Dutch (and known as Wipers to the British), was the linchpin that halted the German advance to the English Channel. Once a great medieval city famous for its Cloth Hall, the entire town was reduced to rubble by 1918. Visit the “In Flanders Fields” museum in the restored Cloth Hall and its cathedral. Afterward, walk the city ramparts to the Menin Gate, erected after World War I to commemorate the missing soldiers who fought at Ypres. You will have some time to stop for lunch on your own before continuing to the Ypres Salient. Held by the British Army throughout the war, you will see the preserved Advanced Dressing Station where army surgeon John McCrae served and put his experience into the immortal poem “In Flanders Field.” Pay your respects at the impressive Tyn Cot British Commonwealth Cemetery and the moving Langmark German Cemetery. End at the village of Passchendaele, where perhaps the fiercest battle of the war took place in 1917. After dinner on your own, return to Menin Gate with your expert, where every night buglers play the Last Post in a moving ceremony.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Ariane

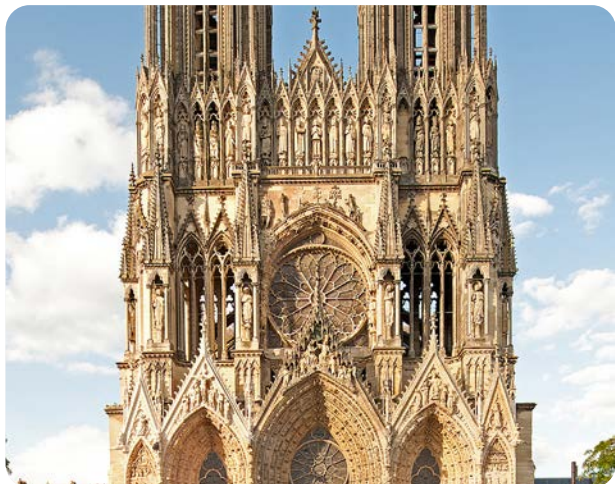
**Included Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 3: The Somme, 1916

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The initial attack along the Somme River was launched on July 1, 1916, by British Field Marshal Douglas Haig. Visit Vimy Ridge, Thiepval, Beaumont-Hamel, and other key sites where the fighting raged for over four months in the unexpectedly prolonged conflict on this front. Many of the troops who





fought on the Somme were from the British Commonwealth, with several local memorials that honor the troops of South Africa, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Ulster, and Wales. After lunch on your own, you will continue to the American Military Cemetery at Bony, where many of those who fought in this area are buried. Drive by the Riqueval Tunnel, constructed under Napoleon, and discuss the joint American-British attack on the Hindenburg Line on September 29, 1918. End the day in Reims in the heart of the Champagne region and enjoy dinner in a local bistro.

**Accommodation:** Hyatt Centric Reims

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

#### Day 4: First Battle of the Marne, 1914

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You will head out to the 800-year-old Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Reims. The cathedral was severely damaged by German shellfire during the early days of the Great War, and restoration work continues to this day to preserve its famous sculptures and tapestries. Continue to Fort de la Pompelle also known as Fort Herbillon—which served as part of the fortification belt in the Séré de Rivières system during the war. After a picnic lunch, visit the Centre d'interprétation Marne 14-18 museum for an in-depth look at the war and the impact it had on civilians and soldiers alike along the Marne River. Conclude the day with a tour of the cellars of one of the major Champagne houses, complete with a tasting of the region's signature drink. Following a lecture from your expert, spend your evening at leisure in Reims.

**Accommodation:** Hyatt Centric Reims

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

#### Day 5: Second Battle of the Marne, 1918

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In 1918, the Valley of the Marne once again became a key battleground site. Meet your local guide and begin the day with a visit to the Belleau Wood and Memorial Chapel, the site of the first major engagement of the US Army in World War I and an inscribed monument to the valor of the US Marines who captured the area. The second battle signifies the shift in favor of the Allies in The Great War, though at a staggering cost of life. Walk through the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and learn the history of this evocative resting place. You'll break for lunch at a local restaurant before heading to

HAVE BEEN RESIDENT FOR  
BELONGING TO FAMILIES  
RESIDENT IN THE  
ADJOINING DISTRICTS  
GAVE THEIR LIVES



the magnificent Château-Thierry American monument overlooking the Marne Valley. US military operations in the region are engraved on the side of the monument, alongside a map of the significant battle sites. Return to Reims for dinner in a local restaurant together and debrief with your expert about the day's visits.

**Accommodation:** Hyatt Centric Reims

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## Day 6: The Meuse-Argonne

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This morning, you will depart Reims with your Great Courses expert and local guide and head toward Verdun. Drive through the Meuse-Argonne region to the US Meuse-Argonne Military Cemetery—the largest US military cemetery in Europe—with a brief stop to pay your respects at the Monument to the Lost Battalion in the Argonne Forest. Visit the nearby Argonne Museum for a curator-led tour of its US weapons, uniforms, and private collections. End the day in Verdun for dinner in a local restaurant.

**Accommodation:** Hôtel Jardins du Mess

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 7: Verdun and Saint-Mihiel

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Start the day in Verdun, where France held steadfast against the German army from 1914 to 1918. With your local guide and expert, explore the battered and scarred French battlefields and forts of the area, beginning with a visit to the Douaumont Ossuary, which contains the remains of French and German soldiers. From there, take a guided tour of the fortified bastion and the underground casements at Fort Douaumont, followed by a visit to the Verdun Memorial and Museum, along with the adjacent vanished village of Fleury-devant-Douaumont. After lunch, you'll head to Saint-Mihiel, a former German-controlled area behind French lines. The solo offensive by the United States at Saint-Mihiel Salient was one of the most important





and successful American campaigns in World War I. Gain an understanding of what it was like to live through these great battles at the Apremont la Forêt war trenches and stop at the majestic Montsec American Monument, complete with a bronze relief map of the area operations. Return to Verdun for an evening lecture with your expert before dinner at your leisure.

**Accommodation:** Hôtel Jardins du Mess

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

### Day 8: On to Paris

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Today, you'll return west along the Marne to visit the Musée de la Grande Guerre in Meaux. Intended to put the Great War into historical and cultural contexts, the museum includes exhibits on the technological developments in such areas as artillery, camouflage, communications, and equipment, including the use of chemical weapons, previously deemed too horrible to bring to action. Continue to Paris and visit Les Invalides, a complex of museums and monuments dedicated to the French military. Your Great Courses expert will showcase how the complex was initiated by Louis XIV and designed as a place for the care and housing of disabled veterans as well as place of worship and now houses the Tomb of Napoleon and the Army Museum. Gather this evening for a farewell reception and dinner to commemorate your exploration of such hallowed ground.

**Accommodation:** Chateau Frontenac

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 9: Au Revoir

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After sneaking in a final café, transfer independently to the airport for individual flights home.

**Included Meal:** Breakfast

# Accommodations



## Hotel Ariane | *Ypres*

The newly renovated Hotel Ariane is the only 4-star hotel in Ypres. Located within walking distance of the historic city center, it offers a tranquil retreat with its quiet rooms and water-garden terrace. Known for its superb customer service, it has been voted by guests as the “Best Hotel in Belgium.” Be sure not to miss the in-house museum and gift shop. **(2 nights)**



## Hyatt Centric Reims | *Reims*

Just a short distance from the Reims Notre Dame Cathedral, this hotel offers comfortable, contemporary rooms overlooking the canal. **(3 nights)**



## Hotel Jardins du Mess | *Verdun*

The Hotel Jardins du Mess is a 40-room luxury boutique hotel at the heart of Verdun. The hotel is beautifully set on the river Meuse and has a restaurant, bar, spa, and arboretum. The hotel was hewn out of a beautiful building that was the former French officers' quarters in Verdun. Wi-Fi is complimentary throughout the guest rooms and hotel. **(2 nights)**



## Hotel Chateau Frontenac | *Paris*

This 4-star hotel is just a short walk from the Champs-Elysees. An elegant property that combines Parisian charm, comfort and an interesting history, the building was formerly a cabaret where Édith Piaf began her career. The spacious 104 rooms and suites with high ceilings feature fabric covered walls, colorful drapes, and soft furnishings. There is free Wi-Fi. **(1 night)**



## Pricing:

Departure	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy	Deposit	
May 17–25, 2027	\$8,195	\$9,670	\$650	<a href="#">BOOK NOW</a>
September 20–28, 2027	\$8,195	\$9,670	\$650	<a href="#">BOOK NOW</a>

## What's Included:

- All accommodations for the duration of the tour
- Meals, as noted in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and visits as noted in each itinerary
- Expertise of The Great Courses Expert, travel director and local guides throughout the tour
- All gratuities for on-tour guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff as part of the group program
- All on-tour transportation, unless otherwise noted
- Quietvox listening devices to facilitate audibility and social distancing on tour
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights, extra hotel nights and other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure mailings and materials with information about the destination and what to expect on tour, including a suggested reading list
- Emergency evacuation insurance