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PLAN AHEAD

By Katie Wells



BAVARIA

Kaltenberg Medieval Festival, Geltendorf | July 10 – 26, 2026

During the weekends, transport yourself into a medieval fantasy at the Kaltenberg Ritterturnier. This is one of the largest medieval events in Bavaria, staged at the Kaltenberg Castle. They are best known for the jousting show, which takes place in an arena and features skilled horsemen, lights, fire and music. Visitors can also see spectacular juggling shows, parades, fireworks and listen to music across five stages. As you stroll, try medieval food like goulash, marvel at demonstrations by skilled craftsmen and shop for medieval wares at the market stalls. Tickets are available online at ritterturnier.de



KAISERSLAUTERN

Nibelungen Festival, Worms | July 17 – Aug. 8, 2026

In mid-July, the stage is set against the backdrop of the illuminated Imperial Cathedral in Worms. This open-air festival tells the famous story of Siegfried the Dragon Slayer. For 2026, the play is "The Hun Queen," created in collaboration with the London theater company "Les Enfants Terribles." The story centers around Princess Kriemhild of Burgundia, who, after Siegfried's death, joins the Huns and becomes the most powerful woman on the continent. Although the play is in the German language, non-German-speaking visitors will also be enamored by the visuals and epic adventure. Tickets are available online at nibelungenfestspiele.de



SPANGDAHLEM

Bitburg Folklore Festival | July 10 – 13, 2026

Folks from the Eifel region and beyond gather for this four-day festival. The town of Bitburg becomes a hub for diverse European culture through music, dance and artistic performances. The festival kicks off with a Bitburg beer tapping. Don't miss the traditional beer keg rolling contest, *Bitburger Bierfassrollen*, which is a fun highlight of the festival. There will be colorful parades and people dressed in traditional costumes to celebrate different countries. Family-friendly activities are planned throughout the event, and the more adventurous can explore the amusement park. Bitburg.de



STUTTGART

Hamburger Fischmarkt in Stuttgart | July 2 – 12, 2026

Since 1987, the traveling Hamburg Fish Market has made Stuttgart an important stop. Ships glide in carrying plenty of fresh seafood from northern Germany and the Karlsplatz in downtown Stuttgart is transformed into a lively fish market and festival for 10 days. A bell ringing at the baking fish tower announces the start of the event. A variety of food stalls offer delicious fish dishes like fish rolls, pickled herring, smoked eels, *Labskaus* (a 'legendary' dish with potatoes, beef and beets), and even maritime-themed cocktails. Entrance to the market is free, and there is plenty of seating and music to listen to while enjoying the fresh catch. fischmarkt.events/Stuttgart



WIESBADEN

Johannisnacht Festival, Mainz | July 10 – 13, 2026

Against the backdrop of the peaceful Schierstein Harbor (AKA "Schiersteiner Riviera") the promenade and fairground will be lined with over 150 market stalls where visitors can shop for handicrafts and eat delicious food. For true summer fun, you can enjoy open swimming in the river at the harbor tip. Bring a towel and change of clothes; after you're done taking a dip, there are fun rides to check out. Don't miss the illuminated dragon boat race on Saturday, the SUP (Stand-up Paddling) championship, the duck race or the children's and senior citizens' afternoon. wiesbaden.de ■



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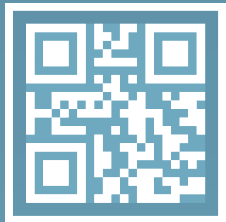
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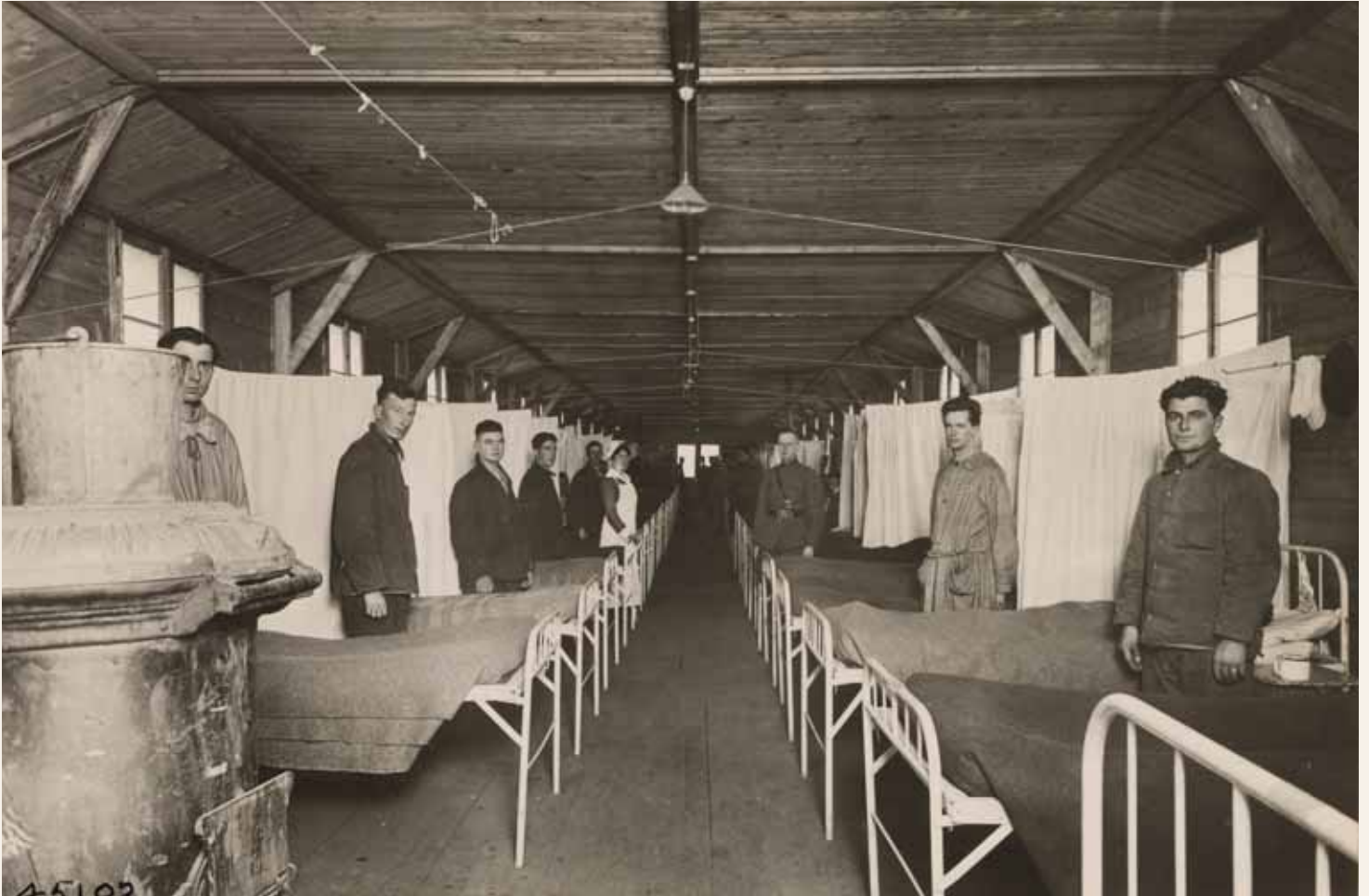


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The 1918 Influenza Pandemic



Influenza Ward at Base Hospital in Langres, France during World War I.

SOURCE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES, NAID: 86696421

By Kat Nickola

In 1918, soldiers on both sides of World War I faced a universal enemy: influenza. The flu outbreak became a worldwide pandemic quickly, with nearly one third of the global population infected over two years. For military members fighting in trenches, sanitation issues worsened their susceptibility. The virus disproportionately killed young adults.

With the Great War raging in Europe, the magnitude of the flu pandemic was heavily censored by media outlets on both sides of the fighting. No one wanted to reveal potential weaknesses or

degrade morale. However, Spain had remained neutral and the country's news outlets readily reported on the severity. This led many to believe that Spain was the epicenter, and the disease was incorrectly called the "Spanish flu."

At the St. Mihiel American Cemetery in France, roughly half of the people buried are victims of the flu pandemic. They were soldiers who fought in the trenches, survived battlefields and willingly put themselves in harm's way.

Is it any less heroic to die of disease while in a battlefield hospital?

Felicia Bories, an interpretive guide at St. Mihiel American Cemetery says that dying so far from the front line was considered less glorious. "Soldiers got medals for being wounded in action and citations for their heroic behavior on the battlefield, but they didn't get anything for dying of the fever." It seems unfair.

Many of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in late 1918 or early 1919 found glory on the battlefield before dying from a pandemic. They, too, served their country. They, too, are heroes. ■

GERMAN WORD OF THE MONTH

Weltschmerz (noun) Weltch - mayrtz

Literal translation: World pain

Meaning: A sense of melancholy a person feels when considering the inadequacy of the world and their powerlessness to change it.







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REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF VERDUN

By Tamala Malerk



EXTERIOR OF THE VERDUN MEMORIAL MUSEUM

PHOTO BY KATIE WELLS

Located about three hours from the KMC and Wiesbaden areas, Verdun, France, was the location of one of the longest and bloodiest battles of World War I. Fought between German and French forces, the Battle of Verdun lasted from Feb. 21 through Dec. 15, 1916, and over half a million soldiers lost their lives. Today, you can visit several museums, memorials and forts dedicated to the memory of this fateful battle.

The first stop my spouse and I made was at the **Verdun Memorial Museum**. While you can arrive to the museum by train, we found that driving was most convenient to explore the greatest number of war-related locations in the area in one day.

The Verdun Memorial Museum features exhibits, artifacts and artwork that provide historical and contextual information for understanding this location's importance in World War I. While my spouse was more fascinated by the war stories and artifacts from both German and French soldiers, I found myself drawn to the art on display that was made during the war or inspired by it afterwards.

We spent about two hours exploring everything the museum had to offer. This is a popular spot, and I recommend booking tickets in advance. As a bonus, you can purchase a combo ticket which includes admission to Fort Douaumont, which was our next planned stop. Learn more and purchase tickets at memorial-verdun.fr.

Immerse yourself in one of the battlefield areas at **Fort Douaumont**. This fort is the largest of the forts protecting Verdun. The Germans captured this large fort only five days into the battle. French forces were unable to recapture the fort until October 1916. They ultimately recaptured much of the lost land in Verdun by the end of the battle in December. The German loss of soldiers from the battle left a gap in their manpower that they never fully recovered from for the duration of World War I.

Visitors of the fort can walk around the exterior of the vast fort as well as head inside and see the various barracks and other interior areas. Bring a jacket no matter what time of the year you visit because the interior of the fort is kept at 54°F (12°C) at all times. Also, you will want to wear closed-toe, water-resistant shoes because the floors of the interior can be quite damp. While we chose to explore the fort on our own, there are options to book a guided tour to get a real behind-the-scenes experience.

While driving around, you can stop to walk along battle areas. My spouse was able to locate some via Google Maps, but you will also find pull-off areas where you can park and walk nearby.

Our final stop of the day was the **Douaumont Ossuary**. The Ossuary features both interior and exterior memorials for soldiers and military organizations. The final resting place for over 130,000 unidentified French and German soldiers is located in the Cloister area. There is a short film at the beginning of your visit about the Battle of Verdun and the purpose of the Ossuary. Because of its purpose, there is a quiet calm about the place that leaves you with a heavy feeling not only while exploring but long after leaving.

The Battle of Verdun was a significant part of World War I. By visiting the area, you can learn so much about its history and cultural significance. ■



EXTERIOR OF THE FORT DOUAUMONT

PHOTO BY TAMALA MALERK



SIDEVIEW OF THE EXTERIOR OF THE DOUAUMONT OSSUARY

PHOTO BY TAMALA MALERK

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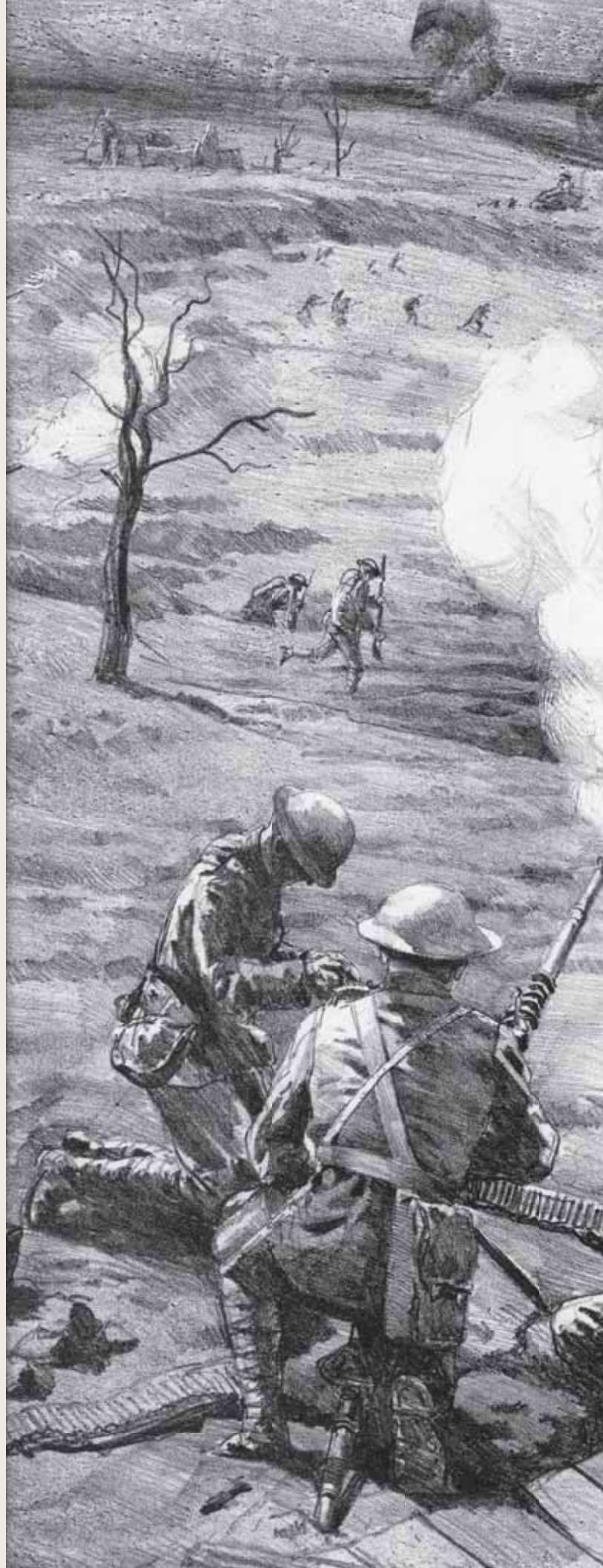
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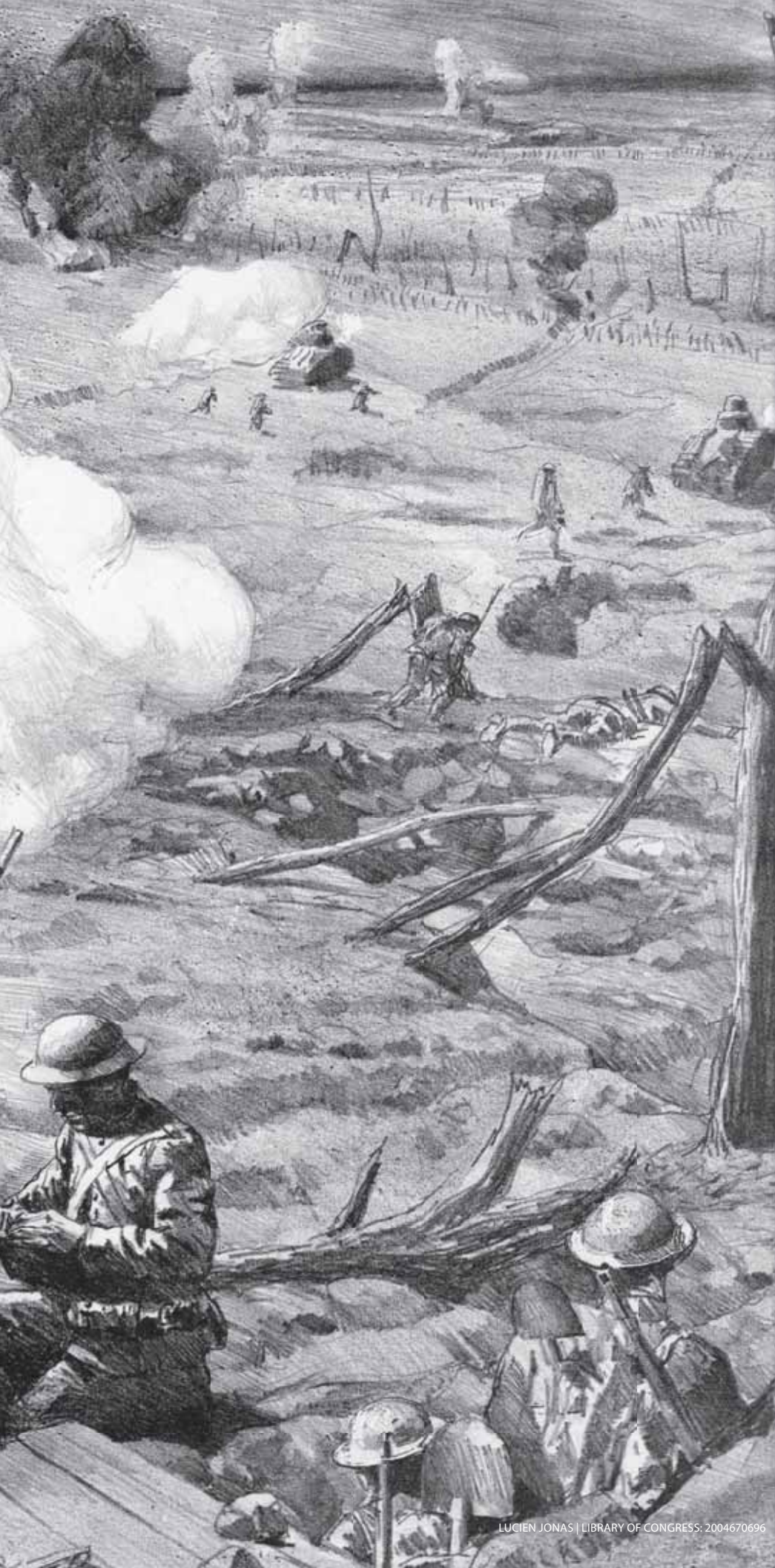
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Legacy of the Battle of St. Mihiel

By Kat Nickola





Drenched from the rain and wind,

Sgt. George A. Potel and the rest of the 26th Infantry Regiment continued to fight forward. They had been slogging through the mud since before dawn on the day prior: Sept. 12, 1918. It was the first D-Day in U.S. military history and a turning point of World War I.

Though only 20 years old, Potel was experienced in battle. He had set aside his ranch job in North Dakota to enlist in July of 1917, arriving in Liverpool, England on Christmas day. By January, he was in France defending the villages of the Western Front. In March, he was promoted to Corporal. Potel received a special citation in August, a General Order for conspicuous gallantry after he brought in valuable intelligence near Soissons. In August, he was promoted to Sergeant. Potel then found himself in the rain and mud preparing for the Battle of St. Mihiel in September of 1918.

Potel's regiment, part of the 1st Infantry Division, was in the IV Corps and joined the I Corps, poised on the southern face of a bulge (or salient) of German enemy forces. More Americans in the V Corps were positioned along the northwestern face of the bulge. The aim was to pinch off the bulge with American troops meeting in the middle at a village called Vigneulles while French forces trapped Germans at the apex near the village of St. Mihiel. It was a highly strategic pincer move since the defensive bulge was pushing further into France and protecting a vital German railroad center in Metz. Under General Pershing, this would be America's first major independent offensive, creating, for the first time, the large U.S. First Army. It became known as the Battle of St. Mihiel.

On the other side of the bulge,

Pvt. Joseph J. Doyle had also spent the last day drenched and with little rest, firing on enemy trenches and supporting infantry as they fought their way southeast into enemy-held territory. He was part of the 102nd Field Artillery Regiment, assigned to the 26th Division, which was nicknamed the "Yankee Division" since it was comprised of National Guard units from New England.

Print showing soldiers firing machine guns during the Battle of St. Mihiel in France during World War I.

Doyle was 23 years old and came from New Jersey. After arriving in France in January 1918, he was quickly placed on the front lines. Doyle had seen combat on four different battlefields before his unit was moved to St. Mihiel. In the dark of the morning on Sept. 13, the infantry unit Doyle supported overtook the village of Hattonchâtel on a hill above Vigneulles, where they were to meet up with units coming from the south.

As Potel and Doyle moved their flanks toward each other, pilot

1st Lt. David C. Beebe and observer 2nd Lt. Franklin B. Bellows took off from Bicqueley Aerodrome. Flying a two-seater DH-4 biplane, their reconnaissance mission took them over the enemy lines to identify troop movements and artillery emplacements. The weather was horrible with low clouds, rain and wind. Eight kilometers over enemy lines, their plane was targeted by machine gun fire.

Lt. Bellows joined the Army in Illinois in May 1917, and soon after graduated from Northwestern University. He commissioned and soon volunteered for the Air Service. After training, he sailed for France where he received advanced training, including as an aerial observer. He was sent to the front on Aug. 15, 1918.

The important information Bellows gathered was turned in by his pilot who was able to limp the plane back to safety. Bellows, however, had been shot multiple times and didn't survive. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the French Croix de Guerre and is buried at St. Mihiel American Cemetery, plot B, row 23, grave 5. In 1933, a new runway was constructed on the Waimānalo Military Reservation in Hawaii and named Bellows Field in his honor.

On the battleground, it was clear that the pincer move had been successful. Early in the morning of Sept. 13, contact had been made in Vigneulles, roads had been blocked and the villages were defended.



2nd Lt.
Franklin B. Bellows¹



Pvt. Joseph J. Doyle²



1 PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE ABMC
2 PHOTO OF PVT. DOYLE PROVIDED BY THE ABMC FROM THE NEW JERSEY STATE ARCHIVES



USASC, 1918 | LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: 2016652674

German prisoners of the U.S. Army in St. Mihiel, 1918



Map to illustrate the offensive of the St. Mihiel salient.

Grave markers at St. Mihiel American Cemetery, France.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, GEOGRAPHY AND MAP DIVISION: 92684034

However, the victory was not without loss. Sgt. Potel was injured and evacuated to Mobile Hospital 39 near the village of Aulnois. He died on Sept. 16, 1918. Potel is buried at St. Mihiel American Cemetery, plot C, row 3, grave 6.

The next two days found U.S. forces pushing back the German line and capturing at least 13,000 German prisoners. In all, it is estimated that 2,000 U.S. servicemembers lost their lives.

The Battle of Saint Mihiel exemplified America's might and innovation. By quickly building up forces, Pershing had the element of surprise for his rapid advance. In addition, strategically combining infantry troop tactics with tank units and the first large-scale use of U.S. Army Air Service proved to be a success. After this battle, the now-proven U.S. forces moved on to the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and the end of World War I.

Pvt. Doyle, however, did not forge ahead with his unit. A new enemy had taken hold: the flu virus (see the Spotlight). Doyle spent his remaining months battling for his life in a hospital bed. He passed away on Jan 1, 1919, and is buried at St. Mihiel American Cemetery in plot B, row 15, grave 31.

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) maintains the St. Mihiel American Cemetery and Memorial. It is a peaceful 40.5-acre site located in the area of the Saint-Mihiel offensive. 4,153 service members are buried at the cemetery, and 284 names of the missing are inside the memorial. Nearby is the Montsec American Monument, an impressive hilltop rotunda commemorating the soldiers who fought in the region. In the area south of St. Mihiel, there are a few preserved trenches and forts used by German forces like the *tranchées du bois brûlé* and the Fort de Liouville. ■



WARRICK PAGE | PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE ABMC



A Shared Heritage

How Scouts and Veterans Built a Culture of Collaboration

By Kat Nickola

Every Memorial Day, events are held across Europe at monuments, cemeteries and on U.S. installations. Wreaths are laid. Flags are placed. Taps is played. And at each event a local Scout troop will be there to help honor the fallen.



Members of Panzer Scout Troop 44 fold an American flag during a ceremony at Luxembourg American Cemetery.

PHOTO BY DAVID KALEY



Members of Panzer Scout Troop 44, based in Stuttgart, Germany, at Luxembourg American Cemetery.

PHOTO BY DAVID KALEY

There are over 60 traditional Scout troops in Europe, and many are made up of military-affiliated boys and girls that meet on U.S. military installations. For a lot of those Scouts, connecting with service members and veterans is personal. However, scouting has a long association with honoring those who have served in the military.

Scouting America began in 1910 as Boy Scouts of America with the aim of promoting self-reliance, individualism and patriotism in young men. At the time, there was concern that more populations were moving from rural settings to cities and that boys were no longer learning outdoor skills, citizenship knowledge and character development.

Scouting organizations were popular in the early 1900s with a variety of organizations to join including Girl Scouts of the USA which offered girls similar activities. Both groups remain separate entities, but nowadays Scouting America is open to a diverse membership, with co-ed, boys' and girls' units depending on the program. The traditional Scouts program is open to youth aged 11–17, but it is only one of five programs offered.



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The connection between the Scouts and our military veterans has been part of the organization since the beginning. It began in 1913, when Scouts were asked to assist Civil War veterans during a ceremony memorializing the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg.

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During World War I, Scouts played active roles on the home front planting war gardens, providing free labor on farms and even forming coastal patrols, stepping in for those who were serving in the military. Once the war was over, Scouts continued to support those who served by being active participants in Armistice Day celebrations.

At the beginning of World War II, Scouts mobilized once more. This time, it was at the call of the federal government. Every two weeks, the Office of War sent Scouts thousands of posters to hang in their local communities across the U.S. They earned an official title as "Government Dispatch Bearers."

After the war, Scouts began the tradition of placing flags on the veteran graves at National Cemeteries. Over time, they developed closer ties with their local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and American Legion organizations; they began placing flags and taking part in Memorial Day ceremonies around the world. Nowadays, they honor all known veteran graves. Many troops overseas continue to be sponsored by one of these veteran organizations, retaining the special connection between Scouts and veterans.



Scouts from Vogelweh Troop 64 meet with a veteran in Bastogne during Nuts weekend.

Members of Scout Troop 1420 help move the American Legion.

PHOTO BY NICK LONG

PHOTO BY KAT NICKOLA

Scouts remain a vital part of events that honor our veterans throughout the year. Scouts lay wreaths and place flags at veteran cemeteries for Memorial Day and Veterans Day; they support special military history events; they help and honor veterans through Eagle Scout projects and collaborate with veteran organizations. ■



Member of Crew 44 in Normandy. PHOTO BY ELISABETH WEBBER

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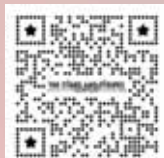




PHOTO BY

Amanda Mills

The **Seebensee in Ehrwald, Austria** is photographer Amanda Mills' "happy place." It's easy to see why with such a dramatic and tranquil view of the Zugspitze massif reflecting in the clear blue water. To get to Seebensee, you can take the Ehrwalder Almbahn cable car up to hiking trails that wind through an alpine pasture and lead to the gorgeous lake. Cycling is also an option with moderate to challenging trails. ■



Many trails go to Seebensee, but all roads lead to Rome. Have you visited any unique Roman ruins in Europe? Send us Your Snapshot for a chance to be featured in a "What's Up" magazine!



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Toussaint, Maurice, Artist. St. Mihiel. [Paris: Cornille & Serre] Photograph. Library of Congress: 99613528

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OVER \$2,500 In Prizes

9

86FSS PRESENTS:



GIVESBACK BINGO

5

FREE EVENT!

THURSDAY 21 MAY

1700-2000

RAMSTEIN OFFICERS' CLUB

FUN/FOOD/PRIZES



First Finalist will be picked!





International School Westpfalz

- English speaking all-day school from Kindergarten to Year 12 (ages 4 to 18)
- Internationally renowned and established educational programs
- Experienced, highly qualified teaching and learning professionals
- Differentiated learning pathways that inspire passion in a respectful and innovative learning environment
- Extra-curricular activities and before/after school care available 7.00 until 8.00 am and 3.30 until 5.00 pm

