

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



Landscapes of Peace: The Legacy of World War I in Belgium & France Featuring Rolling Vineyards & Farm to Table Cuisine JUNE 15-23, 2020 DETAILED ITINERARY

This program examines how the First World War was fought and how it has been remembered. Visits to major sites on the Western Front in Belgium and northern France highlight the scope and impact of the war on this region, which has experienced a sustained peace since the Second World War. Historically reputed for its wine production, the area is also enjoying a culinary resurgence.

Begin with two days in Ypres, Belgium, the heart of the Western Front battlefield, and visit the site that inspired John McCrae's iconic poem "*In Flanders Fields*." From there, cross into Northern France to witness first-hand the scale and devastation of Verdun and the Somme, which are often seen as having inaugurated and defined modern warfare—and even the modern age itself. While the military history of World War I is fundamental, you will also learn about the experiences of common soldiers and civilians—the ordinary people who were swept into the conflict. World War I inspired fabled literature, art, and poetry, and had a formative impact on the world that followed.

As you explore the region, take full advantage of your location in Reims, the main city in the Champagne region, with its beautiful boulevards, Roman remains, and superb fine dining scene—along with visits to vineyards and samplings of its most famous product.

GROUP SIZE: 18 to 24 guests

PRICING: \$7,595 per person double occupancy / \$8,835 single occupancy

STUDY LEADER: Ambassador (Ret.) **R. NICHOLAS BURNS** is the Roy and Barbara Goodman Family Professor of the Practice of Diplomacy and International Relations at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He is also faculty chair of the Future of Diplomacy Project and the Project on Europe and the Transatlantic Relationship, as well as director of the Aspen Strategy Group and a senior counselor at the Cohen Group.

From 2014-2016, he was a member of Secretary of State John Kerry's Foreign Affairs Policy Board at the U.S. Department of State. A career diplomat, he served in the United States Foreign Service for twenty-seven years until his retirement in April 2008. He was Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from 2005 to 2008. Prior to that, he was Ambassador to NATO (2001-2005), Ambassador to Greece (1997-2001), and State Department Spokesman (1995-1997).

His lecture topics will be available closer to departure.

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

MONDAY, JUNE 15

DEPART U.S. FOR BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Independent flights to Brussels.

TUESDAY, JUNE 16

ARRIVE BRUSSELS / YPRES

Upon arrival in Brussels, transfer to Ypres and check in to the Ariane Hotel, your accommodation for the next two nights.

In the afternoon, gather for a program orientation followed by a walking tour of the town.

Visit the Ypres War Victims Monument, which is dedicated to 155 civilians and military victims from Ypres who died as a result of the war. Also see the impressive Lakenhalle building (Cloth Hall), a market and warehouse for merchants that was destroyed during World War I and rebuilt over a span of 30 years. The building now houses the In Flanders Fields Museum, which focuses on the individual stories of those involved in the war and intends to inspire visitors to examine Ypres' role, how and why we remember, and how we look at the many other nations that were involved in World War I.

In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant before experiencing the Last Post Ceremony at Menin Gate, a nightly ritual held at 8pm since 1928.

Overnight: *Ariane Hotel (D)*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

YPRES

Begin today just north of Ypres at the Essex Farm Cemetery, the site where Joh McCrae wrote the iconic poem "*In Flanders Fields*," which ultimately led to the poppy becoming a symbol of World War I remembrance.

Continue northwest to Langemark German Cemetery, where more than 44,000 German soldiers are buried. Spend time taking in *The*

Morning Soldiers, a bronze statue depicting four figures created by Munich sculptor Professor Emil Krieger.

Nearby is the site of the Pilckem Ridge Gas Attack of 1915 and the St. Julien Canadian War Memorial at Vancouver Corner, also known as the 'Brooding Soldier.'

Drive a short distance to visit Tyne Cot Cemetery in Passchendaele, where the British lost 300,000 soldiers in the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917.

After lunch, stop by Hellfire Corner, an intersection with Menin Road that was an important junction under constant observation and fire by Germans on the high ground. View a demarcation stone, one of 12 surviving today in Ypres Salient, marking the point of the German's closest advance to Ypres.

Continue on to Hill 62, now called Sanctuary Wood, one of the few places where an original trench layout can be observed. Visit the long trenches to get a limited but hard-hitting impression of how dark and frightening the conflict must have been.

End the day south of Ypres at the site of the art installation *Coming World Remember Me*. What began in 2010 as a mission to create 600,000 sculptures to commemorate all the victims of World War I in Belgium is now a memorial and art installation featuring large pieces by artist Koen Vanmechelen, alongside the 600,000 smaller sculptures.

Dinner is at a local restaurant tonight.

Overnight: *Ariane Hotel (B, L, D)*

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

REIMS

In the morning, depart the hotel and cross the border into France and the beautiful Somme district, the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting in World War I.

Stop first at the Newfoundland Memorial at Beaumont-Hamel. This site is one of the few places where the ground has been undisturbed since the war. There will be an opportunity to walk through this area of the

Western Front where shell-holes and the trenches of both sides can still be clearly seen.

Close by is the Thiepval Memorial, commemorating more than 72,000 men from the British and South African forces who were reported missing in the Somme before March 20, 1918. The remains of approximately 50% of the missing were recovered but could not be identified; the remainder have never been recovered. Nearly 90% of the men commemorated on the memorial were killed during the Battle of the Somme; 12,000 were lost on the first day alone.

Pause at the Guards Cemetery at Lesbeoufs, the site of a historic attack on September 15, 1916 where three Coldstream Battalions attacked in line, side by side (1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns). It also marked the first time tanks were deployed in action. Harvard alumni Dilwyn Parrish Starr is commemorated here.

A short distance away is the Lochnagar Crater, the largest crater ever made by man in warfare.

Enjoy lunch at Le Bistrot Antoine before visiting the Museum of the Great War. Built within a medieval castle, this absorbing museum follows the chronology of the war, giving a comparative and objective view of the three main belligerent nations' experiences of war.

Continue south towards Reims and stop at the St. Quentin Canal, where hundreds of prisoners of war took 8 years to dig a 3.7-mile tunnel. During World War I, the Germans turned this underground canal into a veritable barracks with dressing stations dug out along the banks. The canal was part of the Germans' formidable Hindenburg Line, which was broken by the American troops in a brilliant offensive in September 1918.

The final stop of the day will be at the Somme American Cemetery. The 14.3-acre cemetery contains the graves of 1,844 of Americans who died in battle. It is located on the spot where the 107th Infantry Regiment suffered nearly 1,000 casualties during the first day's attack, the largest one-day American regimental loss of the entire war. Among the Americans buried here are three Medal of Honor recipients, two brothers, James and Harmon Vedder, whose deaths inspired the creation of

the Gold Star Mothers, and Nurse Helen Fairchild who died as a result of lending her gas mask to a wounded soldier.

Upon arrival in Reims check into the La Caserne Chanzy Hotel & Spa, Autograph Collection.

Dinner this evening is at Jerome's.

Overnight: *La Caserne Chanzy Hôtel & Spa (B, L, D)*

FRIDAY, JUNE 19 REIMS

This morning, drive about 40 minutes to the Chemins des Dames. During World War I, the western front ran through the Aisne department. The Chemin des Dames is a crest line between the Aisne and Ailette valleys. Its location and underground quarries made it a veritable fortress. After the First Battle of the Marne in September 1914, the Germans retreated to the heights above the Chemin des Dames and French troops were unable to flush them out.

The first stop will be at the Monument des Basques, which pays tribute to the 36th Infantry Division, as the division was predominantly composed of men from the French Pays Basque. The views over the Plateau de Californie are sweeping and one gets a real sense of the battleground from here.

Next visit the reconstructed village of Cerny-en-Laonnois, which was at the center of fighting on the Chemin des Dames. Today it has both French and German cemeteries, a chapel of Remembrance, and a British war memorial to the "Lancashire Lads". On one of the slopes next to the Caverne du Dragon Museum stands the Constellation de la Douleur, a sculpture by Christian Lapie, paying tribute to the courage of African soldiers killed during 1917.

Enjoy lunch at the Auberge du Pont de Rethondes where owner-chef Ludovic Colpart and his wife, Delphine, welcome guests to their gourmet restaurant in the heart of the Picardie.

In the afternoon drive to the 14-18 Tunnels of Soissonnais. Among the meadows here there

is a tangible link with the French army. In a quarry owned by farmer Jean Luc Pamart are a series of underground caves where soldiers found both respite and an outlet for expression through sculpture. The cave walls are illuminated by the most extraordinary carvings and murals left by the frontline troops who sheltered there.

The final stop for the day will be at Compiègne. In November 1918, with an Allied invasion imminent, the Germans sent a small delegation to the Supreme Allied Commander of the Allies, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, who was at his headquarters in a converted railway carriage in the forest of Compiègne in northern France. They were under the mistaken impression that they were there to negotiate terms. However, Foch made it clear that they were there to sign Germany's unconditional surrender. Three days of fruitless negotiations followed before the Germans signed the armistice, lodging a formal complaint about the harsh terms imposed on Germany by the victorious Allies.

For many Germans – Adolf Hitler included – the signing of the armistice in the forest of Compiègne was the ultimate betrayal and a national humiliation. To the French, it was one of their greatest moments of triumph.

Return to Reims mid-afternoon and enjoy a walking tour of the city including the extraordinary Reims Notre Dame Cathedral, an architectural marvel and UNESCO World Heritage site that was the victim of more than 300 shells during World War I, melting the iron roof and wooden interior. However, some of the celebrated stain glass windows were spared by a family of glass makers who removed the windows piece by piece. Admire Chagall's 20th-century designs in bold reds, blues, and yellows that were installed for the cathedral's 800th birthday in 2011.

Dinner and the rest of the evening is at leisure.

Overnight: *La Caserne Chanzy Hôtel & Spa (B, L)*

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

REIMS

Drive just over an hour to the battlefields of Verdun, a poignant tribute to the 800,000

casualties suffered here during World War I. A French and German battlefield, it is rarely visited by other nationalities. To the French, Verdun is sacred.

Start at the Verdun Museum, which provides a helpful visual presentation of this "modern" war—machine guns, flamethrowers, poisonous gas, and airplanes were all first used in World War I.

Visit Fort Tavannes where Harry S. Truman fought and where, on December 31, 1918, he wrote a moving letter to his wife, Bess.

Stop at L'Ossuaire de Douaumont, an ossuary and cemetery of the final resting place for 130,000 French and Germans whose last homes were the muddy trenches of Verdun. The artillery-shell-shaped tower and cross design of this structure symbolizes war and peace.

Enjoy lunch on the terrace of Brasserie des Pelerins and continue on to Butte de Vauquois. Before the war, it was a large hill some 950-feet high with the small village of Vauquois at its peak. By the end of 1916, mine warfare on an unprecedented scale had transformed the landscape. Today, a visitor to Vauquois will see a small memorial, but no sign of the village. There are now two hills instead of one, the original having been divided in two by a series of enormous mine craters: industrial destruction on an unimaginable scale.

Nearby is the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery where 14,246 American soldiers are buried within its 130.5 acres. Most of those buried here lost their lives during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

Thirty minutes away is La-Mare-aux-Boeufs where, after a 10-15 minute walk along an overgrown dirt path, there are the remains of a German hospital.

From here, head to Ferme de Navarin Memorial, which was erected above the remains of thousands of soldiers who could not be properly identified after the battle that occurred here in 1915. Amongst those killed was Henry Farnsworth, Harvard class of 1912.

Dinner is at leisure this evening.

Overnight: *La Caserne Chanzy Hôtel & Spa (B, L)*

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

REIMS

Today's focus is the Second Battle of the Marne, considered the pivotal battle of World War I as Allied troops blunted the German advance and started the counteroffensive that would ultimately win the war. It also became the battle that helped shape the legend and character of the modern American military, especially the Marines, and signaled the arrival of the United States as a modern military power.

The first stop is at the tiny village of Fismes and the even tinier hamlet of Fismette, which became the site of some of the most intense fighting of the war. In the closing months of World War I, the German Military made one final offensive including the battle for Fismette where the 28th Infantry division was bombarded with artillery and then storm troopers, forcing the Americans to the center of the town. Eventually, the Germans even used soldiers armed with flamethrowers to flush Allied soldiers out of hiding. Indeed the fighting during this time was categorized as being particularly brutal in that it was predominantly hand to hand and street to street. Fismes and Fismette were all but destroyed during the battle resulting in damage far exceeding that of Reims. The bravery and dedication of these American troops was the foundation of what became the Last Man's Society, formed by surviving members of the 28th Division.

Close by is Les Fantômes, a sculpture on the Butte Chalmont near Oulchy-le-Château in the Aisne, and one of the major works of Paul Landowski, a French sculptor of Polish descent. It stands on the exact spot where the outcome of the Second Battle of the Marne was decided in 1918.

Arrive at the town of Château Thierry for lunch at Il Calcio.

A few miles away are the grounds of the largely forgotten Battle of Belleau Wood. The 5th and 6th Marine Regiments, under the command of the U.S. Army's 2nd Division, were tasked with capturing the hunting forest known as Belleau Wood and clearing it of German soldiers. This was the battle that would most define the United States Marines

as Floyd Gibbons, a reporter with the Chicago Tribune who lost an eye at Belleau Wood, depicted the battle as a heroic victory by the Marines while, in truth, Army soldiers also fought in the forest.

Drive a short distance to the Château Thierry Monument, a large, pillared structure on a hill overlooking the town and the Marne River Valley. Château-Thierry was the first town to be liberated as a result of the offensive, and the memorial commemorates the sacrifices and achievements of the Americans and French before and during the Aisne-Marne and Oise-Aisne offensives.

Close by is the Aisne-Marne German Cemetery, where over 8,000 Germans are buried with four names on each of the grey granite headstones: two each on the front and back. There are even a few Jewish German soldiers who gave their lives.

Head back towards Reims, driving east along the Marne for a stop at Les Franquets Farm where there is a magnificent view of the area where the Doughboys held the crossing of the Marne.

Continue on the Rainbow Division Memorial a ten-foot tall bronze statue of an American soldier carrying the body of his dead comrade. Created by James Butler, a British artist and member of the Royal Academy in London, the statue stands on the site of the Croix Rouge farm where the battle of 25th and 26th July 1918 was fought. It pays tribute to the US 42nd Division, in particular to the 167th Infantry Regiment of Alabama.

The last stop for the day is at the village of Chamery, where Quentin Roosevelt was shot down in July 1918 during the second Marne offensive in an air battle with 5 other pilots from his unit. He was buried by the Germans at the site of the crash but in September 1955 his remains were transferred to the American War cemetery in Normandy, to lie beside those of his brother.

Depart the hotel this evening to drive to the charming village of Sacy for a champagne tasting. Then walk to the beautiful Château de Sacy for a very special dinner with glorious view of the vineyards.

Overnight: *La Caserne Chanzy Hôtel & Spa (B, L, D)*

MONDAY, JUNE 22

REIMS

This morning depart for Épernay and the Maison Moët & Chandon for a private guided tour of the wine cellars, followed by a tasting.

Continue on to the picturesque village of Hautvillers in the Montagne de Reims Natural Park. Overlooking the Marne Valley, it has an uninterrupted view of the hillside vineyards of Champagne and was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2015 under the Champagne Hillsides, Houses, and Cellars classification. The Benedictine Abbey of Hautvillers was the home of Pierre Pérignon and where Pérignon, a Benedictine monk, came upon the *méthode champenoise* in 1670. Pérignon is said to have invented the process of double fermentation that creates champagne's unique bubbles. It is here that Dom Pérignon is buried.

Return to the hotel for some time at leisure.

Later this afternoon, depart the hotel to drive to Le Manoir de Verzy. Overlooking the rippling vineyards of the Montagne de Reims, the romantic Manoir de Verzy has been a part of the Veuve Clicquot domain for more than a hundred years. Enjoy your final afternoon here with a guided tour of the vineyards and wine cellars as well as a tasting that will be led by a wine ambassador from Veuve Clicquot.

The evening concludes with a specially prepared farewell dinner.

Overnight: *La Caserne Chanzy Hôtel & Spa (B, L, D)*

TUESDAY, JUNE 23

RETURN HOME

Transfer to the airport for your return flights home (B).