SOJOURNERS' TRAVEL™
CURATED HERITAGE ADVENTURES

Trenches, Vintages, and Valor
10-Day | WWI American Western Front Masterpiece



Step onto the sacred battlefields of Europe for an unforgettable journey where military history, fine wine, and exceptional cuisine converge. *Trenches, Vintages, and Valor* is a meticulously curated 10-day roundtrip itinerary from Paris designed for travelers who seek meaningful historical immersion paired with boutique luxury. Accompanied by an expert WWI military historian and dedicated tour escort, you'll venture beyond the tourist trail to explore the defining landscapes of the Western Front while enjoying elegant accommodations and exclusive tasting experiences across France and Germany.



Follow in the footsteps of the American Expeditionary Forces from the legendary Belleau Wood to the battle-scarred hills of Saint-Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne. Walk the ground where history was made, explore the tunnels of Verdun's Fort Douaumont, visit the site of the "Lost Battalion's" heroic stand, and pay tribute at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, the largest American military cemetery in Europe. Throughout the journey, expert interpretation transforms these historic landscapes into vivid stories of courage, sacrifice, and perseverance.



This experience is as much a celebration of regional culture as it is a study of war. Each day's discoveries are complemented by extraordinary culinary and wine experiences, from vintage Champagne tastings in ancient Roman chalk cellars to elegant meals featuring regional specialties paired with renowned local vintages. Crossing into Germany's picturesque Moselle Valley, guests explore medieval fortresses, stay in charming boutique properties, and enjoy private Riesling tastings in centuries-old stone wine cellars. Concluding with a private dinner cruise on the Moselle River and a scenic return through Luxembourg, this distinctive itinerary offers an unforgettable blend of history, heritage, wine, and luxury.

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Sample Itinerary:

Duration	*10 Days / 9 Nights*
Arrival / Departure	*Paris – Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG)*
Base Hubs	*Courcelles-sur-Vesle (2 Nights) | Champillon (near Épernay; 1 Night) | Les Monthairons (near Verdun; 4 Nights) | Boppard (2 Nights)*
Lodging	
Château de Courcelles	*A magnificent 17th-century estate that once hosted Napoleon.*
Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa	*Overlooking the vine-covered hills of Champillon).*
Château de Monthairons	*A historic castle along the Meuse River that served as an active military hospital during WWI.*
Bellevue Rheinhotel	*An elegant Art Nouveau riverfront property*
Pacing	*Thoughtfully paced to balance in-depth battlefield exploration with immersive culinary experiences and luxurious boutique stays, this journey minimizes hotel changes while allowing ample time to fully absorb each region's history, culture, and wines.*

- **Day 1: Paris Gateway & The Turning Point of the Marne**
  - **Valor (Military Heritage):** Arrive at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport. Meet your dedicated trip hosts and expert WWI military historian. Transfer immediately east to the

historic Marne sector. Stand at the commanding Mondement Monument, the strategic vantage point marking the definitive, heroic halt of the German advance during the First Battle of the Marne (1914). Gain a comprehensive theatrical briefing on the opening maneuvers of the war.

- **Vintages (Culinary Adventure):** Convene for a private individual or group welcome dinner featuring an artisanal Brie de Meaux cheese tasting paired elegantly with Coteaux Champenois – the rare and highly coveted traditional still wines of the Champagne region.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Château de Courcelles (A magnificent 17th-century estate that once hosted Napoleon).

Day 2: The American Crucible – Belleau Wood, Hill 204 & Fère-en-Tardenois

- **Valor:** Dedicate the day to intensive tactical terrain analysis. Traverse the boulder-strewn timberline of the Belleau Wood Battlefield, exploring raw shell craters and surviving frontline trenches where the U.S. 4th Marine Brigade halted the German spring offensive in June 1918 to earn their "Devil Dogs" moniker. Pay respects at the adjacent Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and drink from the village Bulldog Fountain. Ascend the Hill 204 Monument in Château-Thierry to analyze the American Expeditionary Force's command of the river valley. Conclude at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery in Fère-en-Tardenois, honoring the heavy sacrifices of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division.
- **Vintages:** Unwind in Épernay with an exclusive, private cellar tour and master tasting at a boutique Récoltant-Manipulant (grower-producer) Champagne house.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Château de Courcelles.

Day 3: The Fortress of Reims

- **Valor:** Conduct a detailed structural tour of Fort de la Pompelle, the key, heavily fortified stronghold that withstood years of relentless German artillery bombardments and protected the city's flank. Afterward, explore the majestic Reims Cathedral, examining the physical scars and remarkable postwar restoration of this iconic monument shelled intensely throughout the conflict.
- **Vintages:** Descend deep into the ancient Roman chalk pits (crayères) of a world-renowned Champagne House for a private, guided tasting before a sophisticated afternoon lunch paired with prestige cuvées.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa (Overlooking the vine-covered hills of Champillon).

Day 4: Verdun and the Logistics of The Sacred Way

- **Valor:** Drive east along the historic Voie Sacrée (The Sacred Way), studying the unprecedented vehicular logistical operation that sustained the French Army during the brutal 10-month attrition campaign of 1916. Spend the afternoon dissecting the concrete fortress network of Verdun, featuring entry into the chilling subterranean galleries of Fort Douaumont, a somber walk through the Douaumont Ossuary, the

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phantom "erased village" of Fleury-devant-Douaumont, and the preserved Bayonet Trench.

- **Vintages:** Gather in a rustic Lorraine tavern to experience authentic Potée Lorraine (slow-cooked pork and winter vegetable stew) paired with crisp white wines from the local Côtes de Toul.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Château de Monthairons (A historic castle along the Meuse River that served as an active military hospital during WWI).

Day 5: The Saint Mihiel Offensive (1st Infantry Division Tactical Trail)

- **Valor:** Dedicate a full day to explicitly tracking the "Big Red One's" lightning push to reduce the heavily fortified Saint-Mihiel Salient in September 1918.
  - The Jump-off: Start at Seicheprey and Marvoisin, the exact sectors where the 1st Division pushed out of their trenches at 5:00 AM on September 12.
  - The Breach: Follow the assault route through Richecourt, analyzing how the division rapidly bypassed and penetrated complex German wire networks.
  - The High Ground: Ascend the imposing Montsec Monument, capturing a sweeping panoramic view of the plains where the 1st Division flanked the stronghold.
  - The Historic Link-Up: Stop at the traffic circle in Vigneulles-lès-Hattonchâtel to stand before the First Division Monument, marking the exact spot where the 1st Division connected with the 26th "Yankee" Division early on September 13, cleanly trapping the retreating German forces.
  - Conclude with an evening tribute at the peaceful Saint-Mihiel American Cemetery.
- **Vintages:** Indulge in a private individual or group dinner at a local estate featuring regional culinary delicacies paired with Pinot Noirs from the Côtes de Meuse.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Château de Monthairons.

Day 6: The Meuse-Argonne – Montfaucon & The High ground

- **Valor:** Shift the tactical focus to America's largest, deadliest, and definitive military operation. Spend the day analyzing the opening, brutal phases of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Ascend the towering Montfaucon American Monument to examine the heavily fortified German observation heights and concrete bunkers that frustrated the initial Allied advance. Explore the surrounding ruined village remnants and the complex network of supporting German artillery positions.
- **Vintages:** Enjoy an afternoon masterclass and tasting of artisanal local spirits, including regional Mirabelle plum brandies and local craft beers.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Château de Monthairons.

Day 7: The Meuse-Argonne – The Lost Battalion Ravine & Romagne

- **Valor:** Dive into the dense, unforgiving terrain of the Argonne Forest. Hike down into the remote ravine to the exact coordinates where Major Whittlesey and the "Lost Battalion" made their heroic, surrounded stand in October 1918. Study the extreme geographic features that complicated American Expeditionary Force communications and supply lines. Spend a profound afternoon at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in

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Romagne-sous-Montfaucon – the largest American military cemetery in Europe with over 14,000 graves – giving you ample time for personal reflection and tribute.

- **Vintages:** A private historian-hosted individual or group dinner featuring regional wild game, hand-foraged chanterelles, and rustic country wines.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Château de Monthairons.

Day 8: Into the Moselle Valley – Koblenz Headquarters & Bernkastel-Kues

- **Valor:** Drive north from the Meuse-Argonne directly across the German frontier into the breathtaking Moselle Valley. Journey to Koblenz, the supreme headquarters of the U.S. American Army of Occupation managing the Rhineland and Moselle sectors starting in late November 1918. Afterward, trace the river south into the heart of the Middle Mosel to Bernkastel-Kues, where American units were extensively billeted among the local civilian populations during the post-Armistice occupation era.
- **Vintages:** Walk through the beautifully preserved medieval half-timbered architecture of the Bernkastel Market Place. Indulge in an evening tasting of world-famous, ultra-steep slope Rieslings inside a 300-year-old vaulted stone cellar.
- **Boutique Lodging:** Bellevue Rheinhotel (An elegant Art Nouveau riverfront property) or a luxury wine estate hotel in Bernkastel-Kues.

Day 9: The Valley Fortress Lines and The Final Post

- **Valor:** Travel a short distance upriver to Cochem. Tour the towering Reichsburg Cochem or the fairy-tale Burg Eltz to understand the historical defense geography of the valley lines. Review rare archival exhibits showcasing everyday civilian life, logistics, and civilian management under U.S. military governance during the occupation era (1918–1923).
- **Vintages:** Board a private river boat for a celebratory, farewell cruise down the winding Moselle River. Enjoy a catered lunch of fresh river trout, regional German charcuterie, and crisp, dry Weißburgunder (Pinot Blanc).
- **Boutique Lodging:** Bellevue Rheinhotel.

Day 10: Luxembourg Frontier to Paris CDG Extraction

- **Valor:** Complete the driving loop westward back into France. Pass through the grand sovereign nation of Luxembourg to pay tribute to this historic frontier crossroads.
- **Vintages:** Stop for a light, farewell lunch in the beautiful Ardennes region, raising a toast to the shared journey of trenches, vintages, and valor.
- **Departure:** Arrive at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport by late afternoon for your evening transatlantic flights home.

For those wishing to extend their adventure in France, optional pre- post-tour extensions in Paris are available! Special round-trip air packages are also available!!

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