

# Battlefield Exploration



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## The Battle of the Bulge

*The battlefields of the Battle of the Bulge are centred around the town of Bastogne and the route of Kampfgruppe Peiper. Depending on the available time, there are several sites that can be visited. This is an example itinerary.*

### The Tour

#### DAY 1

Your professional battlefield guide will come pick you up at your accommodation\*.

From Ypres we'll drive to **Wereth**, where on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1944 eleven Afro-Americans – black GIs of the 333<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion were killed by German SS after having surrendered. The memorial – erected in 2004 – honours their memory and all black and segregated units who fought in Europe during World War 2.

Next onwards to **Losheimergraben**, which was the departure point for the attack route of Kampfgruppe Peiper. Joachim Peiper was given command over about 100 Panther V tanks and a battalion of 42 Königstigers, along with the infantry of the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment. Their orders were clear: to push forward as far as possible and secure the bridges over the River Meuse at Huy and Liege. After seeing the famous dragon's teeth at Losheimergraben we'll drive via Merlscheid, Lanzerath en Buchholz to Honsfeld. On route we'll pass several sites where American troops were slaughtered by the SS. At Honsfeld, for example, 19 disarmed American soldiers were shot in cold blood. The Germans also captured 60 vehicles and 15 anti-tank guns.

Our next stop will be **Büllingen**, where a huge oil depot became the battlefield for American and German troops. After a hard fight the Germans were able to get their hands on 250,000 liters of gasoline.

From Büllingen onwards to **Baugnez** to visit the *Baugnez 44 Historical Centre*. Just next door is the site of the *Malmédy Massacre*, in which 84 American prisoners of war were mass executed by the Nazis.

In **Trois Ponts** we'll hear the story of how American engineers were able to destroy all bridges and tunnels, thus halting the German advance on that route. The memorials to the 551<sup>st</sup> Parachute Infantry Battalion in **Rochelinval** unfortunately tell the story of how these men were almost annihilated in the battle.

Onwards towards the bridge of **Habimont** to hear the story of the 291<sup>st</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion. Here Joachim Peiper looked at the American troops blowing up the bridge from only a couple of hundred yards away.

Via Rahier and Cheneux – where heavy fighting took place between the 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment and the SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler – we drive to **La Gleize**, where Peiper and his men finally had to abandon their attack. A visit to the *December Historical Museum 1944* is certainly worth the visit. At the entrance you'll find an authentic *Königstiger* and in the museum lots of interesting photos, maps and artefacts have been displayed.

Next onwards to Bastogne to check into your hotel. Dinner and evening at leisure.

## DAY 2

Your professional battlefield guide will come pick you up at your accommodation in Bastogne at 9.30 am. We start the tour today looking at the original Sherman tank on **Place McAuliffe**, the central square of Bastogne that was named after the American commander of the troops during the Battle of Bastogne. A walk through the town will show several sites linked to the history of the Siege of Bastogne in 1944-1945.

Our next stop will be the **Mardasson Memorial**, commemorating the 76,890 American casualties of the so-called Battle of the Bulge. Next to the memorial we'll also visit the impressive **Bastogne War Museum**. The museum provides a modern view on World War 2 and clearly explains how the battle evolved. The life of the people that lived through the battle forms the focus of the whole story. The modern building and fabulous museum will certainly leave an impact on every visitor.

We drive back to the historic centre of Bastogne for lunch. After lunch we'll visit the **Bastogne Barracks** and the **Cave McAuliffe**, which was the actual HQ for the Americans in Bastogne. The terrain is still owned by the Belgian military. It was also here that McAuliffe said the historic word "Nuts!" when asked for a reply on the German demand to surrender.

Just across the Bastogne Barracks is the communal cemetery, where the grave of local heroine Renée Lemaire can be found. The Belgian nurse offered her services in the American military field hospital during the Siege of Bastogne, but was killed on Christmas Eve by a German bomb.

Next we drive to **Bizory** to have a look at the *Easy Company Memorial*, sponsored by among others Tom Hanks and his wife, and to visit the **Bois de la Paix** (Peace Woods). The wood was created for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge and designed like the UNICEF logo (mother and child). About 4,000 trees were planted by the American veterans of the Battle of Bastogne.

The fox holes near **Foy** are also a must-see on this tour. We'll have a look at them before driving to **Recogne** to see the German military cemetery. Depending on time we'll also visit some of the sites where famous commanders as Major Desobry, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Cherry and Lieutenant-Colonel James O'Hara secured the perimeter around Bastogne.

Back to Ypres. End of the tour at about 7.30 pm.

*\* When accommodated in the Ypres area, there will be no extra charge for the pick-up and drop-off at your accommodation. If you want to be picked up from other places (like Bruges, Ghent, Lille, Arras, ... et cetera), there will be an extra charge for the extra mileage.*

## Practical Information

- » **Departure** from your accommodation in Ypres at about 7.30 am; back in Ypres by 7.30 pm the next day.  
Other departure points (Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Lille, ...) are possible, but may result in an extra charge.
- » **Tariff:** € 695 (with a maximum of 7 participants).
  - > If more than 7 participants, tariff will be depending on the coach tariff.
  - > In the price is included: transportation with minibus and professional guide/driver.
  - > Extra entrance fee to be paid during this tour: € 8 p.p.
- » **Walking:** only short distances from the car to the actual sites. Never more than 800 yards.

**Want to add a specific site to the itinerary? Or want to combine several itineraries?  
Please let us know, and we'll provide a quote!**