



War Sites in Argonne 1914 - 1918

The front line located 10km north of Sainte Ménehould extends from Sommepy-Tahure to Vauquois passing through Massiges and Vienne-le-Château. Most of the fights took place in the Forest. This one was so thick that neither adversary was allowed to take advantage of situation. The soldier dug trenches (positional warfare) then galleries in the ground in which they fought (mines war). In 1918, the American troops delivered the villages of the country. The vestiges and strategic sites of the "Great War" are described below.

La Main de Massiges

This hill which looks like a hand, was called "Bergnase" (the hill in the shape of a nose) by the Germans. This was one of the most wanted areas of the First World War.

Innumerable galleries had been dug by German and French soldiers. From 1914 to 1915, the area of Bonséjour at the Main de Massiges was held by colonial regiments. The hill was finally taken of the Germans in 1915. Between Sommepy-Tahure and Massiges, five villages had been totally destroyed and have never been rebuilt.

Visit: The military Necropolis of Minaucourt lès Hurlus where 21010 soldiers lie, the vierge of the bees

To visit: on Thursday in July & August



Vienne-le-Château

Vienne le Château stood near the front line in the Argonne forest where so many lethal fights were going on.

Schrapnel can still be seen in the front of the church. Other Traces of the war (trenches, schrapnels, camps, ossuary...) can be found along the recently laid out path in the Bois de la Gruerie.

Visit: The national graveyard of la Harazée and the national grave yard of Vienne le Château. Little Museum in la Maison du

Le Bois de la Gruerie

Violent fighting took place in this wooded area in 1914. The bayonet and the dagger were the weapons most frequently used to drive the German assaults back. The anniversary of these battles is celebrated on the first of July.

Visit: military graveyard and the ossuary.

Le Camp Moreau

This on a third line German camp is being restored by volunteers. One can visit the shower, the galleries under the ground, the rest of the installations that were used to live during the first world war.



Visit: each Saturday morning from 9.30 am to 13.00 pm.

Le Four de Paris

Located on the road over La Chalade to La Harazée, this hamlet is nowadays only a town square. The rest of the village was totally destroyed by intensive bombings.

La Haute Chevauchée

This old Roman way followed the crests line over which the Germans wished to gain control. The ossuary, built in 1922, was inaugurated by the French President Raymond Poincaré. Small graves, trenches and mine holes (remnants of the mine war) can be seen on the left and on the right of the road.

Visit: The ossuary, the military graveyard, the trenches, the mine holes, the Kaiser Tunnel

The Kronprinz's Shelters

These shelters were built by the Germans in the forest between Varennes and La Harazée. They were used as command posts for the major generals and protected them from bombings. They were connected to each other by narrow tunnels (still visible) and were equipped with modern comforts (electricity, luxurious furniture stolen in the nearby villages...). The Kronprinz (the eldest son of Wilhelm II.) may have stayed in these shelters before launching the attack on Verdun.

Varennes en Argonne

In 1927, the state of Pennsylvania commissioned the construction of a monument in order to pay homage to the American soldiers who fell during the war.

Visit: the 14/18 museum is open from Easter till October

Montfaucon

During the war, the Hill of Montfaucon was used as an observatory. It was taken back from the Germans on the 27th of September, 1918 the American troops. Since 1938, an American memorial 58 m high has stood at the top. You can reach the top of the tower climbing 234 stairs up.

Visit: *germans blockhouses, romantic ruins old church of the VIIIth century*

Romagne sous Montfaucon

The American graveyard of Romagne sous Montfaucon is the largest and wildest Necropolis in Europe. 22 000 soldiers have lain here since 1922. In the center of this cemetery of crosses you can see a marble chapel dating from 1930.

Museum 14-18

Visiting daily except Wednesday 12.00 - 18.00 h (every morning and on appointment in December, January and February) guided tours possible. Tél: +33(0) 329 85 10 14

Nantillois

In 1925, a memorial was erected here by the state of Missouri in memory of its soldiers. This memorial symbolizes a winged Victory brandishing a crown made of laurels.

Vauquois

The hill of Vauquois, as a strategic site, was used by the Germans as an observatory. Initially situated on the top of hill, the village was totally destroyed in the fighting, though rebuilt below after the war.



In Vauquois, the German and the French troops were facing each other in a murderous combat. Each side dug underground galleries, in which they used to live and fight, deeper and deeper into the earth. This “butte” became a place of life and death, and at the end a grave. Vauquois is famous because of the importance of the mines war. The bombs, used during 4 years of the war, could be heavy (ranging from several kilos to many ton).

These explosions produced the shell-holes many meters deep that you can see on the top of the hill.

Visit: *the galleries, the craters, the memorial*

Guided visits of the galleries and the site on the first Sunday and the day of Monuments and Patrimonies.

Lost Battalion in Binarville

A monument to Binarville celebrates the famous story of the american lost battalion on the 2-7 october 1918.

Book in the tourist office

Museums about the first world war

-Musée de Sommepey-Tahure

Located in the townhall. Visit upon request: ask within the townhall or phone: 03 26 66 80 04

-Musée de Sainte Ménehould (reopening 2011)

Room dedicated to the Great War

-Musée de Varennes en Argonne

The conflict is explained thanks to models, plans, maps and weapons.

Museum: 03 29 80 71 14

Townhall: 03 29 80 71 01

-Museum of Maison du Pays d'Argonne:

03 26 60 49 40

Military Graveyards

French Graveyards:

- Florent en Argonne
- La Harazée
- Nécropolis of Pont de Marson in Minaucourt
- Sainte Ménehould
- Vienne le Château
- Civil Cemetary of Vouziers (where Rolland Garros, shot down in a flying fight in 1918)

German Graveyards:

- Apremont
- Cheppy
- Eclisfontaine
- Servon Melzicourt

American Graveyard:

- Necropolis of Romagne sous Montfaucon



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