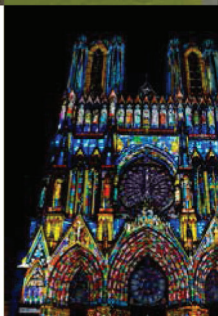




# 14 18



## TIME TO REMEMBER



[rendezvousenfrance.com](http://rendezvousenfrance.com)





1914 - 2014

FRANCE COMMEMORATES



# THE GREAT WAR

Northern France  
Region of Culture



Somme tourisme  
Agence de développement et  
de réservation touristiques









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## INTRODUCTION

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From August 1914 to November 1918, France was the stage for the most violent and deadly war that history had ever known. For 5 years, from the North Sea to the Swiss border, with a front line of almost 1,000 kilometres, millions of men from France, Britain, Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, America, Russia, India and Senegal, and right across the five continents, armed with the most modern and powerful weapons of the day, fought one another on almost a daily basis. Their battles and their deaths stained French soil and seared the memory of the world but have also inspired contemporary hopes of international peace.

As early as the autumn of 1914, just a few weeks after the invasion of the German army, both sides were forced to halt manoeuvre warfare, exhausted by the first battles. So the men took refuge by digging trenches where they were in the plains of northern France or the chalk soil of the Champagne region, in the forests of Lorraine and the Vosges mountains. The war then changed face: the trenches of the 2 camps, barely separated by a few hundred metres, sometimes less, became grids of tunnels and shelters. Large-scale deadly offensives were launched to try to break through enemy lines, like in Artois in 1915, Verdun and the Somme in 1916, and Aisne in 1917. But they did not succeed in properly breaking through the lines until the German offensives and the Allies' counter-offensives of 1918. In fact, a war of attrition took place in which the soldiers suffered regular artillery bombardments, "coups de main" surprise attacks, mine explosions and the boredom of waiting. New weapons were improved, such as planes, while others were invented – tanks, and worst of all, chemical weapons.

The violence of gunpowder and the annihilation that it wreaked are still visible, etched into the landscape of the French regions on the front. From the Nord-Pas de Calais to Alsace, including Picardy, Champagne-Ardenne and Lorraine, visitors can discover the countless marks left by the First World War and relive the realities of war: get lost in the maze of trenches and shell-holes in the Vosges forest, reflect in the huge cemeteries and the great memorials of Artois, see the soldiers' everyday possessions at the Péronne Historial, visit the Fort de la Pompelle in Reims or Fort Leveau in Maubeuge, explore the quarries and underground galleries of Aisne and Oise or look down the vertiginous Boisselle or Vauquois mine craters.



## I MAJOR EVENTS

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**The 2014 commemoration of the centenary of the First World War will be an international occasion. In France, due to a very rich cultural programme and the opening of new sites, visitors will have the opportunity to relive the war that shook the whole world.**

For more information on all the events, go to: [www.centenaire.org](http://www.centenaire.org)

### **16 October 2013 - 23 April 2014 – Opéra de Paris**

#### **Convergences**

This series at the *Opéra de Paris* gives an overview of French music at the crucial moment of the First World War. The programme includes Debussy, Ravel, Lili Boulanger, Louis Vierne, Darius Milhaud, Gabriel Dupont, and Stravinsky.

[www.operadeparis.fr](http://www.operadeparis.fr)

### **15 January - 15 June 2014 - Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris**

24 Rue Pavée, 75004 Paris

#### **The war as seen from the street. Photographic records by Charles Lansiaux**

The exhibition presents a view of Paris during the conflict, through a previously unpublished report by little-known photographer Charles Lansiaux (1855-1939). The 200 photographs on exhibition are taken from the archives of the *Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris*.

[www.paris.fr](http://www.paris.fr)

### **15 February - 21 September 2014 – Musée Lorrain – 64 Grande Rue, 54000 Nancy**

#### **Summer 1914: Nancy and Lorraine in wartime**

This exhibition unpacks a key moment of the first worldwide conflict, the battles in the summer of 1914, and examines the Battle of Grand Couronné and the historical background to the start of the war in Lorraine.

[www.nancy.fr](http://www.nancy.fr)

### **Spring – Péronne and Historial de la Grande Guerre Museum**

As part of the Australian memorial trail, a path will be created on and around Mont St Quentin (near Péronne) in memory of the Australian intervention. In Péronne, a path will commemorate the town's liberation and an exhibition at the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* Museum in Péronne will recount the event.

Tel. : 00 33 (0)3 22 83 14 18 – [www.historial.org](http://www.historial.org)





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### **25 March - 3 August 2014 – *Bibliothèque Nationale de France***

Quai François Mauriac, 75013 Paris

#### **Summer 2014: last days of the Old World**

The exhibition presents the chronology of events from 23 July to 4 August and the sequence of decisions leading up to the war. The end of the exhibition deals with the shock of the beginning of the war.

**[www.bnf.fr](http://www.bnf.fr)**

### **27 March - 30 November 2014 – *Historial de la Grande Guerre Museum***

Château de Péronne, 80200 Péronne

#### **Hear the war: Silence, music and sounds 1914-1918**

This exhibition will offer an historic look at the war through sounds and music: weapon noises, military music, songs, instruments made in the trenches, patriotic concerts on the home front, and the birth of jazz are all themes that will be explored.

**[www.historial.org](http://www.historial.org)**

### **March - April 2014 - November 2015 - Verdun**

#### **Verdun Memorial**

#### ***Centre Mondial de la Paix, des Libertés et des Droits de l'Homme, Verdun***

The World Peace Centre in Verdun will host collections from the Verdun Memorial (closed for refurbishment) until November 2015. A temporary exhibition created with Meuse Council will unveil a part of the collection from the Diers Ancient Military Museum.

**<http://cmpaix.eu>**

### **2 April - 3 August 2014 – *Jardin du Luxembourg railings***

Rue de Vaugirard - 75006 Paris

#### **Fields of Battle – Lands of Peace 1914-1918**

The contemporary photographic exhibition by Mike Sheil, on the *Jardin du Luxembourg* railings, creates a path between the settings of today and the battlefields of the past by simultaneously paying homage to soldiers from over 30 nations and embodying the messages of Peace-building and intergenerational dialogue.

**[www.fieldsofbattle1418.org](http://www.fieldsofbattle1418.org)**



## I MAJOR EVENTS *Cont.*

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### **April 2014 – Haut-Rhin Council**

#### **Wartime lives either side of the Rhine**

The mobile bilateral Franco-German exhibition “*Vivre en temps de guerre des deux côtés du Rhin*” or “*Menschen im Krieg am Oberrhein*”, will be launched.

This bilingual exhibition, formed from partners’ archives and other sources, brings together, in eight thematic chapters, 32 biographies of people who lived through the war in Alsace and Baden-Württemberg.

**[www.front-vosges-14-18.eu](http://www.front-vosges-14-18.eu)**

### **April 2014 - May 2015 – 88000 Epinal**

#### **Life goes on**

*Musée de la lutherie de Mirecourt, Musée de l’Image d’Epinal, Musées de Remiremont, Musée Pierre Noël de Saint-Dié, Musée départemental d’art ancien et contemporain d’Epinal.*

5 museums in Vosges address the same theme: the home front. Five exhibitions, five characters: musician, child, painter, woman and bystander.

**[www.museedelimage.fr](http://www.museedelimage.fr)**

### **16 April - 20 December 2014 – Caverne du Dragon, Chemin des Dames Museum**

02160 Oulches-la-Vallée-Foulon

#### **September 1914: British troops in Chemin des Dames**

The exhibition examines the battles of September 1914 in Aisne which saw the German troops fighting the British expeditionary corps.

**[www.caverne-du-dragon.fr](http://www.caverne-du-dragon.fr)**

### **24 April - 16 May 2014 - Hôtel national des Invalides**

129 Rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris

#### **La Nuit aux Invalides**

The men and women killed or injured while fighting for France will be honoured with the momentous 3D show “*La Nuit aux Invalides*” in a previously unreleased version that also addresses the Second World War, on the 70th anniversary of the Paris Liberation.

**[www.musee-armee.fr](http://www.musee-armee.fr)**



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**28 May - 6 October 2014 – Louvre Museum in Lens – 99 Rue Paul Bert, 62300 Lens**

**War Tragedies (1800-2014)**

The exhibition will present a rich collection of works inspired by disenchantment with war. One of the main sections will shed new light on representations of the First World War.

**[www.louvrelens.fr](http://www.louvrelens.fr)**

**June - November 2014 – LaM – Lille Metropolitan Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art and Art Brut – 1 Allée du Musée, 59650 Villeneuve-d'Ascq**

***Le Chemin des Hommes. Éric Poitevin***

In 1985, Éric Poitevin took portrait photos of almost all of the First World War survivors in his view camera. This resulted in 100 exceptional photographs.

**[www.musee-lam.fr](http://www.musee-lam.fr)**

**7 - 8 June 2014 - Amiens**

***Rendez-vous de la Bande Dessinée d'Amiens – On a marché sur la Bulle***

The 19th edition of the Amiens Comics & Graphic Novels Fair draws links between the First World War and the graphic novels through exhibitions and events.

**[bd.amiens.com](http://bd.amiens.com)**

**20 June - 26 July 2014 (Friday and Saturday evening) – Carrières d'Haudainville, 55100 Verdun**

***“Des Flammes à la Lumière” Show***

Each summer, the company Connaissance de la Meuse organises an impressive sound and light show “From Flames To Lights”, around a scenic re-enactment of the Battle of Verdun in *Carrières d'Haudainville*.

**[www.spectacle-verdun.com](http://www.spectacle-verdun.com)**

Video:

**[www.dailymotion.com/video/xfkluu\\_des-flammes-a-la-lumiere-le-son-et-lumiere-de-la-bataill\\_lifestyle](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfkluu_des-flammes-a-la-lumiere-le-son-et-lumiere-de-la-bataill_lifestyle)**



## I MAJOR EVENTS *Cont.*

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### **28 June - 30 December 2014 – Musée de la Grande Guerre, Pays de Meaux**

Rue Lazare Ponticelli - 77100 Meaux

#### **Join now! The British Empire goes to war**

This exhibition (created in partnership with the Imperial War Museum and the National Army Museum in London, and the In Flandersfields Museum in Ypres, Belgium) revisits the decisive intervention of British forces in the first months of the war, in particular during the Battle of Marne.

**[www.museedelagrandeguerre.eu](http://www.museedelagrandeguerre.eu)**

### **1 July - 10 October 2014 – Thiepval Memorial – 80300 Thiepval**

#### **The Lost Men France**

The Lost Men France is an Land Art installation by the South African artist Paul Emmanuel. His work focuses on remembrance and the collective suffering, by showing 600 metres of road bordered by silk banners with photos and names of soldiers imprinted onto the artist's skin.

**[www.the-lost-men.net](http://www.the-lost-men.net)**

### **14 July - 11 November 2014**

Gare de l'Est, 75 010 Paris

#### **1914: Visages et Vestiges de la Grande Guerre**

Presented at the emblematic Paris Est station, from which the soldiers departed for the front, this photographic collection is unique. It consists of portraits taken between 1996 and 2007, showing the last survivors of the conflict at 100 years old.

After the death of Lazare Ponticelli in 2008, the last of the WWI French soldiers, Didier Pazery worked on the pictures of the old frontline, and on still-life photos of objects belonging to The Great War Museum in Meaux. This series appears in the exhibition, alongside the portraits of the last survivors.

**[www.expo14.com](http://www.expo14.com)**





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### **September 2014 - February 2015 – Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims**

8 Rue Chanzy, 51100 Reims

#### **Peace, 1910-1925? Fronts and wings of Franco-German art**

This exhibition brings together the work of German and French artists on a selection of topics illustrating the consequences of the Great War on the lives of men and women.

**[www.reims.fr](http://www.reims.fr)**

### **5 September - 7 December 2014 - Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire**

9 Rue Fischart, 67000 Strasbourg

#### **1914: Death of the poets**

Charles Péguy, Ernst Stadler and Wilfred Owen were 3 European poets who lost their lives on the battlefields in the First World War. The exhibition focuses both on their lives and their writing, highlighting the particular view of poets on death and the meaning of war.

**[www.bnu.fr](http://www.bnu.fr)**

### **12 - 14 September 2014 – Amiens-Glisly Aerodrome – 80000 Amiens**

#### **Aerial Centenary, Somme 1914-1918**

In Picardy, in the skies above the Somme where the first military planes flew, the Centenary of the Great War will be commemorated with an airshow in Amiens. The programme includes maiden flights, demonstrations by prestigious planes, veteran planes exhibited on the ground, children's kite-making workshops, scale model making, and more.

**<http://www.centenaire-aerien-somme14-18.fr/>**

### **15 October 2014 - 30 January 2015 - Hôtel national des Invalides**

129 Rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris

#### **Vu du front 1914-1918**

The "Views of the front 1914-1918" exhibition, organised by the *Musée de l'Armée* and the BDIC, looks at how the front was perceived at the time, through paintings, drawings, posters, photographs, maps, and more, as well as the weapons, uniforms, debris and materials of war.

**[www.musee-armee.fr](http://www.musee-armee.fr)**



## I - MAJOR EVENTS *Cont.*

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### **October 2014 – 51 000 Châlons-en-Champagne**

#### **War on screen – International Festival of War Cinema**

War on screen is the first international cinema festival in the world dedicated to the vast theme of war and conflict. It takes place in Châlons-en-Champagne, Suippes and Mourmelon in Champagne.

**[www.waronscreen.com](http://www.waronscreen.com)**

### **From 2014 - 2018 – *Historial de la Grande Guerre*, Péronne**

*Château de Péronne*, 80200 Péronne

Each year of the centenary, the collections and exhibitions at the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* will be updated and refreshed in order to line up with the latest historical research, opening the chronological and geographical scope broader than the current presentation.

**<http://www.historial.org/>**

### **November 2014 – 5 to 27 July 2014**

#### **Le Tour de France**

The peleton did not ride during the Great War, and a sizeable proportion of its members joined the front lines and the inferno of trench warfare. Many of them lost their lives, including three previous winners of Le Tour: François Faber, Octave Lapize and Lucien Petit-Breton. Next year's Tour de France will pay homage their memory, and the memory of the millions of soldiers who fell. The route of the 2014 edition will visit many places where the war left its mark. After starting from Yorkshire, Le Tour will follow the front line and go through Flanders, Artois, Aisne, Champagne, Verdun and the Vosges mountains. Lille, Arras, Reims, Epernay, Nancy and Mulhouse will all host stages.

**<http://www.letour.fr/le-tour/2014/us/>**



## 2 NEW SITE OPENINGS AND RENOVATIONS

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### Inaugurations

**28 June 2014 - 80200 Péronne**

#### **Inauguration of the 6th continent**

Created for the Somme Council and planned for spring 2014, the 6th continent is a landscape work by the landscape architect Gilles Clément. Seen as a place of peace dedicated to humankind as a whole, the 6th continent will open opposite the Historial de la Grande Guerre. 6th continent will be inaugurated on 28 June 2014, exactly a century after the assassination of Sarajevo, which threw the world into the first world conflict.

A concert will be given at the event.

Tel. : +33 (0)3 22 71 22 71 – [www.somme-battlefields.com](http://www.somme-battlefields.com)

**November 2014 - 62153 Ablain-Saint-Nazaire**

#### **Inauguration of the International Memorial to fallen soldiers in Nord-Pas de Calais during WWI**

This new memorial, one of the largest in the world, is resolutely modern and inspiring due to its elliptical shape as designed by the architect Philippe Prost. It will be erected to pay homage to the 590,000 soldiers, friends and enemies of the past, who lost their lives on the battlefields of Nord-Pas de Calais between 1914 and 1918.

[www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr](http://www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr)

**May 2015 - Souchez – Pas-de-Calais**

#### **Great War battlefields remembrance centre in French Flanders and in Artois.**

This new venue with its simple architecture will be an important part for the Remembrance Trails in Nord-Pas de Calais. With a floor area of 1200 m sq, it will provide historical information on the events of the Great War in 4 languages. Seven themed spaces will recall the main phases of the conflict. A memorial consultation area will enable visitors to follow the route of the soldiers of all nationalities who died in the region. A teaching room offers an opportunity to provide in-depth information in certain topics and a heritage tourism information desk invites visitors to discover a region amongst the richest in the world in terms of remembrance sites. Access to the centre is free for visitors.

[www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr](http://www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr)



## 2 NEW SITE OPENINGS AND RENOVATIONS Cont.

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### **Renovations**

#### **June 2014 – Fort de la Pompelle**

Route Départementale 944 de Châlons-en-Champagne - 51100 Reims

#### **Refurbishment of Fort de la Pompelle and its Museum**

The Germans, French and Russians came head to head here throughout most of the war. A hundred years later, the Fort de la Pompelle still bears the marks of these battles. For the Centenary, the Fort and its museum will be renovated in order to let visitors discover the site and understand its history and heritage.

[www.reims.fr](http://www.reims.fr)

#### **July 2014 – Nord Department**

#### **Opening of Bataille de Fromelles Museum**

This museum will retell the story of the Battle of Fromelles (19 July 1916) known as the first intervention by Australian forces on the Western Front of the Great War. It will also show the archaeological discovery of the Bois des Faisans mass graves, in which the bodies of 250 British and Australian soldiers lost in battle were found in 2009.

[www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr](http://www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr)

#### **Summer 2014 – Vosges – Haute-Alsace**

#### **Vosges Front**

In order to promote remembrance and focus on the specific Franco-German context, the Haute-Alsace Tourist Development Agency and Vosges General Council have set up a number of actions and projects, aiming to give access to the historical sites along the Vosges Front.

Eight local authorities have worked together around 11 remembrance sites offering fun and interesting activities.

The Vosges area was the only WWI mountain frontline on French soil, and this required specific logistical and transport infrastructure and technology, with landscape impacts and strategic stakes linked to the climatic and geographical constraints. The project as a whole has been awarded the label “Pôle d'excellence rurale” (rural excellence cluster) for Interdepartmental Heritage Tourism of the Great War. It also aims to become a common European heritage site.

[www.tourismevosges.fr](http://www.tourismevosges.fr)

[www.haute-alsacetourisme.com](http://www.haute-alsacetourisme.com)

[www.front-vosges-14-18.eu](http://www.front-vosges-14-18.eu)





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[www.tourismevosges.fr](http://www.tourismevosges.fr)

[www.haute-alsacetourisme.com](http://www.haute-alsacetourisme.com)

[www.front-vosges-14-18.eu](http://www.front-vosges-14-18.eu)

### 3 PARIS, GATEWAY INTO FRANCE

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Many pages of the history of World War One were written in Paris and the Ile-de-France region: the assassination of Jean Jaurès at the **Café du Croissant** on rue Montmartre, the first battle of the **Marne** and of Ourcq, the incredible episode of the **Taxis of the Marne** that lined up at the Invalides to transport soldiers to the front, the role of the **Eiffel Tower**, used to intercept enemy messages, the peace treaty signed in the **Galerie des Glaces of the Château of Versailles**, to name but a few.



*Suresnes American Cemetery*

From the **battlefields around Meaux** to the numerous forts of the Paris defensive camp, from the **Suresnes American Cemetery and Memorial** (with the graves of 1,541 soldiers who died at the front) to the **Fayette Squadron Memorial** dedicated to the American fighter airmen who volunteered alongside the French, or the **Arc de Triomphe**, the final resting place of the Unknown Soldier and symbol of all those who died for the Nation... **many traces of the Great War history remain in the area, particularly in a**

**wide range of museums that offer a way to discover and understand the conflict of 1914-1918.**



*Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*



*La Fayette Squadron Memorial*

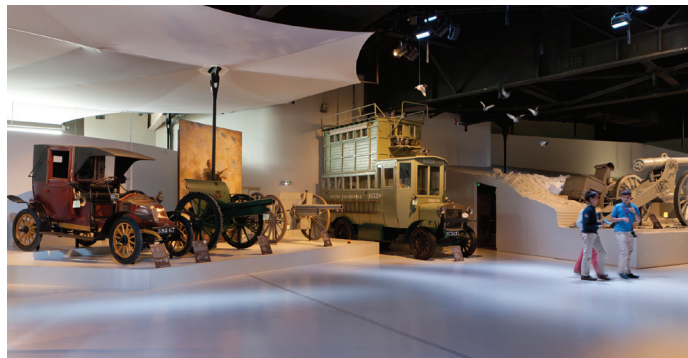


## 3 PARIS, GATEWAY INTO FRANCE *Cont.*

### 3 museums to get to the heart of the Great War

At the entrance to the Battlefields of the Marne, the rarest collection in Europe at the **Musée de la Grande Guerre du Pays de Meaux** offers new insight into World War I. With the reconstitution of a battlefield,

tanks, film projections and sound effects, its innovative scenography provides a way of understanding of the era while shining light on the major upheavals that subsequently changed society.



*Musée de la Grande Guerre du Pays de Meaux*

### **Musée de la Grande Guerre du Pays de Meaux**

#### **Musée de l'Armée**

The prestigious setting of the Hôtel National des Invalides is home to the priceless collections of the **French Army Museum**, which retraces the military history of France and the French Army, particularly from 1914 to 1918.

#### **Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace**

At Le Bourget, the **Aerospace Museum** pays particular homage to those who fought from the skies. Among the world-class collection of flying machines, prototypes, models and space objects is the permanent exhibit on the 1914-1918 war waged from the air, showcasing legendary aircraft and the crucial role of flying aces. Other authentic French, German and British aircraft is also on display at the **Musée Volant Salis** (Salis Air Museum) in Ferté Alais, as part of an authentic living glimpse at aviation.

At the **Paris Est** railway station, where millions of soldiers famously departed for the front, visitors can admire the **fresco, Le départ des poilus, août 1914** ("Departure of French soldiers, August 1914"), a monumental work hanging in the departure hall, painted by Albert Herter in memory of his son, who enlisted in the French army and was killed on the front in 1918.

### **Find out more:**

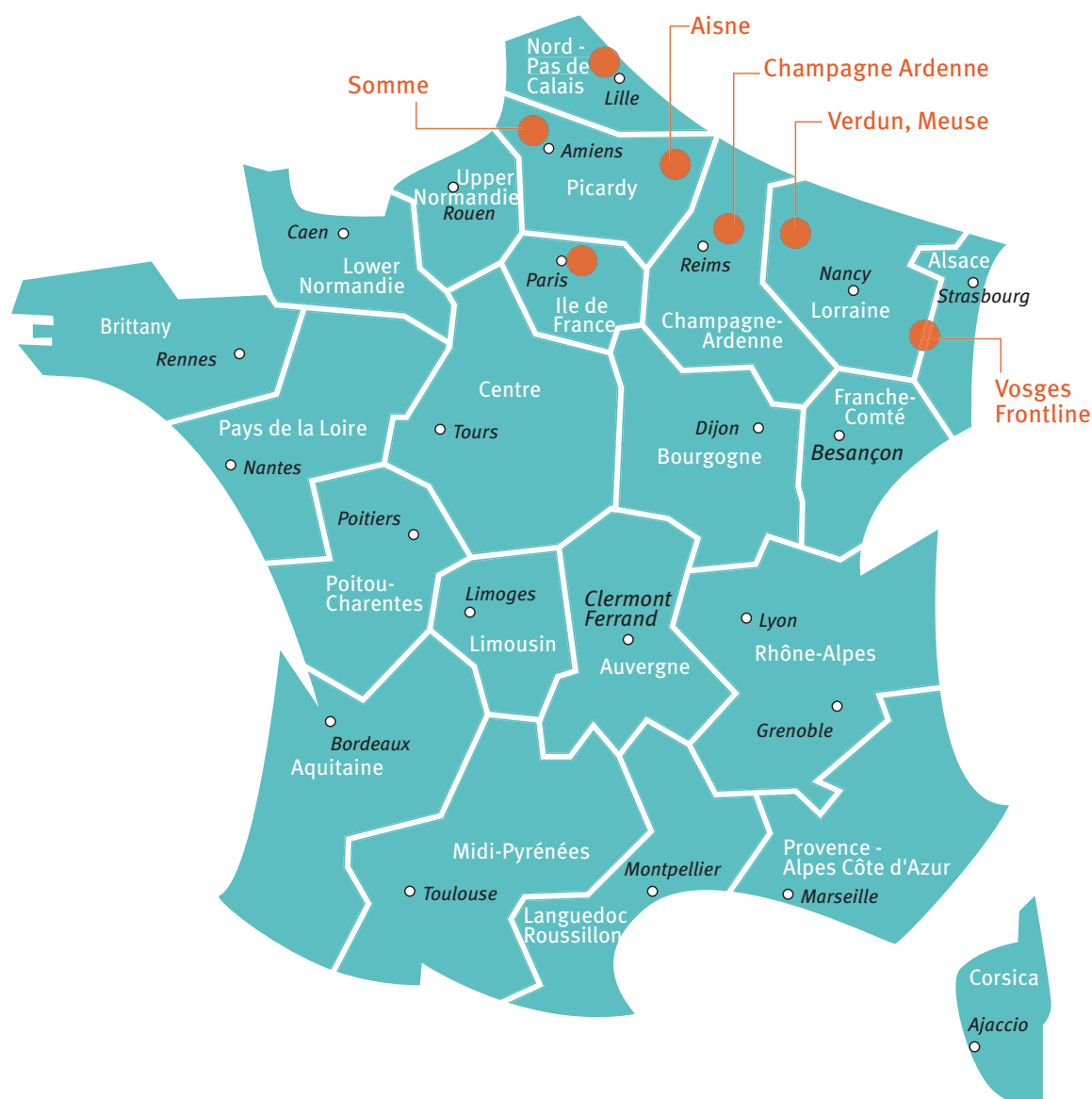
Find the offer on the website of the Paris Ile-de-France Tourist Board [www.nouveau-paris-idf.com](http://www.nouveau-paris-idf.com)



## 4 REMEMBRANCE TRAILS

The Great War left a lasting mark on the areas where the most violent battles took place. The north-east of France was deeply affected, with a frontline running down from the North Sea to the Swiss border.

**Nord-Pas de Calais**, the **Picardy** region, and in particular the departments of the **Somme** and **Aisne**, the **Champagne-Ardenne** region, the **Lorraine** region, with its **Meuse** and **Vosges** departments, and the **Alsace** region, all suffered greatly.



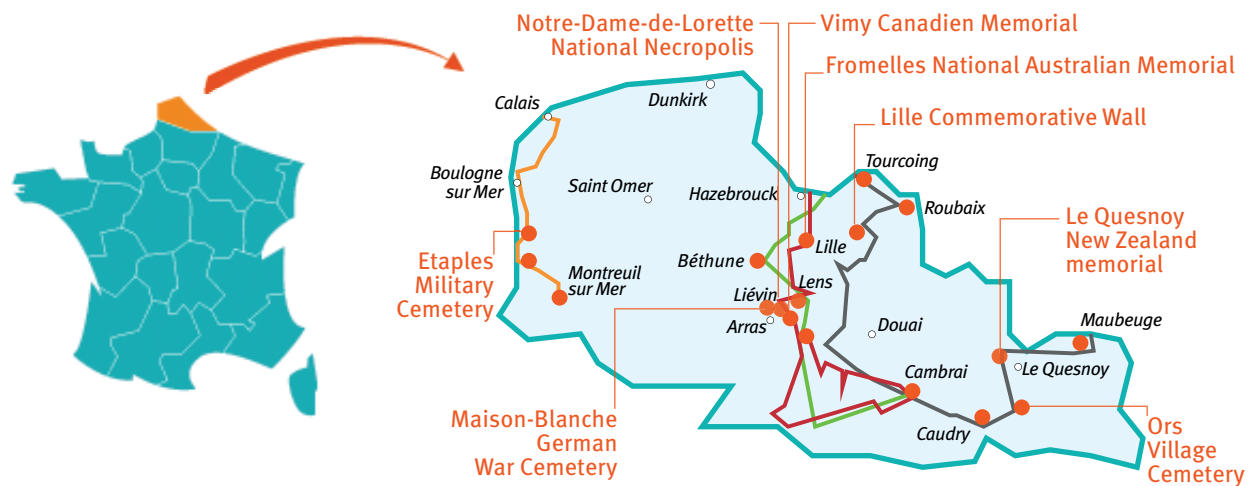
For the commemorations of the centenary of the Great War, these historical destinations are getting together to welcome visitors from around the world.



## Nord-Pas de Calais

There remains today a rich yet little-known First World War heritage in the *Nord-Pas de Calais* region. Military cemeteries, memorials and wartime remains bear silent yet poignant witness to the events that caused this conflict.

The “**Great War Remembrance Trails in Nord-Pas-de-Calais**” offer visitors an opportunity to discover the sites, to understand these crucial times in European and world history and to pay homage to the men and woman, some of whom came from Antipodean shores, who lay down their lives in the region.



### 4 Remembrance Trails in Nord-Pas de Calais

- : The Front
- : The war of movement and the first german occupation
- : Coastline, the support base of the Ally forces
- : Reconstruction of destroyed territories



#### The Front

By late 1914, hopes of a quick victory were fading on both sides. Running from the Belgium coast right down to the Vosges mountains, the frontline spread through the Nord-Pas de Calais region like a huge scar between Flanders and Picardy.

The numerous military cemeteries which remain highlight the diversity of the nations represented, and the global nature of the war:

Within a 20 km radius of Lille there are the **Fromelles National Australian Memorial Park**, and **Neuve-Chapelle Indian Memorial**, just beside **Richebourg Portuguese Military Cemetery**.



Fromelles National Australian Memorial Park



*Notre-Dame-de-Lorette National Cemetery*

Between Lens and Arras, the Artois Hills are home to numerous memorial sites created to pay homage to the men of the French army who fell, particularly in the offensives of May and September 1915 in the region. **Notre-Dame-de-Lorette National Necropolis** in Ablain-Saint-Nazaire, with 20,000 graves, and another 22,000 bodies of other soldiers in ossuaries, remains the largest military cemetery in France.

Not far off, in Neuville-Saint-Vaast, **Maison-Blanche German War Cemetery** was created after the war and is the largest necropolis in France, the last resting place of over 44,800 men who died on the region's battlefields.

Preparing for the Battle of Arras, which was to create a diversion for the French offensive planned in Chemin des Dames, the British army dug a vast underground network of tunnels, part of which is now open to the public: **Wellington Quarry**.



*Maison-Blanche German War Cemetery*

On 9 April 1917, the attack began. In the north, the Canadians succeeded in taking Vimy Ridge, a major chapter in the history of their nation. One of the most stunning commemorative memorials of the Great War stands on the top of this ridge: **the Vimy Canadian Memorial**.



*Vimy Canadian Memorial*

Not far away are the **Monchy-le-Preux Newfoundland Memorial** and the **Bullecourt Australian Memorial Park**, other sites that witnessed the British offensive on Arras.

On 20 November 1917, the British army for the first time deployed a contingent of 476 tanks for its offensive on Cambrai. The **Louverval Memorial of the Battle of Cambrai** commemorates this new era in the arts of warfare.



## Nord-Pas de Calais *Cont.*



### The war of movement and the first german occupation

In late August 1914, after having crossed Belgium, the German army was stopped, on its march towards Paris, at the Maubeuge Stronghold, whose fortifications had been developed as part of the Séré de Rivières defence system. The siege on the town lasted 10 days during which forts of all kinds, such as **Fort de Leveau** which can be visited today, came under fire from German artillery. Maubeuge officially surrendered on 8 September 1914.

After the failure of the first Battle of Marne and the "Race to the Sea", the front became paralysed and the armies dug in. Manoeuvre warfare turned into a war of attrition.

The German army occupied the territories it had taken, including Lille and the surrounding area, a large part of the Nord-Pas de Calais coalfield and the southern part of the Nord department. In the face of the rules imposed by the new military authorities, forms of resistance developed, but were harshly repressed. **Le Mur des Fusillés Lillois** is a commemorative wall that marks the execution of leading members of the Jacquet resistance network on 22 September 1915, and of young Léon Trulin some weeks later.

1918 saw a return to manoeuvre warfare. After the German offensives in spring, the Allied armies launched, under the command of Maréchal Foch, a massive August offensive that would break the German defences.

4 November has remained an important date of commemoration: at the foot of a **New Zealand memorial** in Le Quesnoy, the town's inhabitants pay homage to the fern leaf troops (New Zealanders) who liberated them, while at the **Ors Village Cemetery**, near Cateau-Cambrésis, the great work of the war poet Wilfred Owen, also killed on 4 November 1918, is celebrated.



### Coastline, the secondary base of the Allied army

In 1916, the headquarters of the British Imperial Army was established in **Montreuil-sur-Mer**, which was to become the heart of a huge logistical area that stretched across the entire length of the Channel coast.

Supplies and troops from all over the British Empire arrived through the ports, like those in Calais and Boulogne-sur-Mer. After being trained in a huge camp in Étaples, the soldiers joined different Front zones under British control: Flanders, Artois and the Somme.

Logistical tasks were given to voluntary workers (Labour Corps) - Egyptians, Indians, native South Africans and Chinese, some of whom are buried in the military section of the **Saint-Étienne-au-Mont Cemetery** in south Boulogne.

The largest Commonwealth military cemetery in France, **Étaples Military Cemetery** also recalls the activity of the numerous hospitals established along the coast to care for those injured at the Front. The men who died there were buried in nearby cemeteries, including the Canadian poet John McCrae, author of the famous poem "In Flanders Fields", whose grave can be found in **Wimereux Cemetery**.



*Saint-Étienne-au-Mont Cemetery*



### Reconstruction of destroyed territories

In rebuilding the cities destroyed by the Great War, choices were made in line with the wishes of politicians and the ideas of architects.

**Arras** was rebuilt in the style of its rich heritage with the facades of the houses lining the squares, the Town Hall and its belfry all reconstructed identically to before the war.

In Flanders, cities like **Bailleul** and **Armentières** adopted a regionalist style under the influence of architect Louis-Marie Cordonnier.

Following the example of **Cambrai** or **Lens**, other towns chose a more modern style by adopting an Art Deco look. In the facades overlooking the Grand' Place, **Béthune** managed to successfully blend the regionalist and Art Deco styles.

#### Find out more:

FR: [www.tourisme-nordpasdecals.fr](http://www.tourisme-nordpasdecals.fr)

GB: [www.northernfrance-tourism.com](http://www.northernfrance-tourism.com)

FR: [www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecals.fr](http://www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecals.fr)

GB: [www.remembrancetrails-northernfrance.com](http://www.remembrancetrails-northernfrance.com)



## PICARDY - Somme, the circuit of remembrance

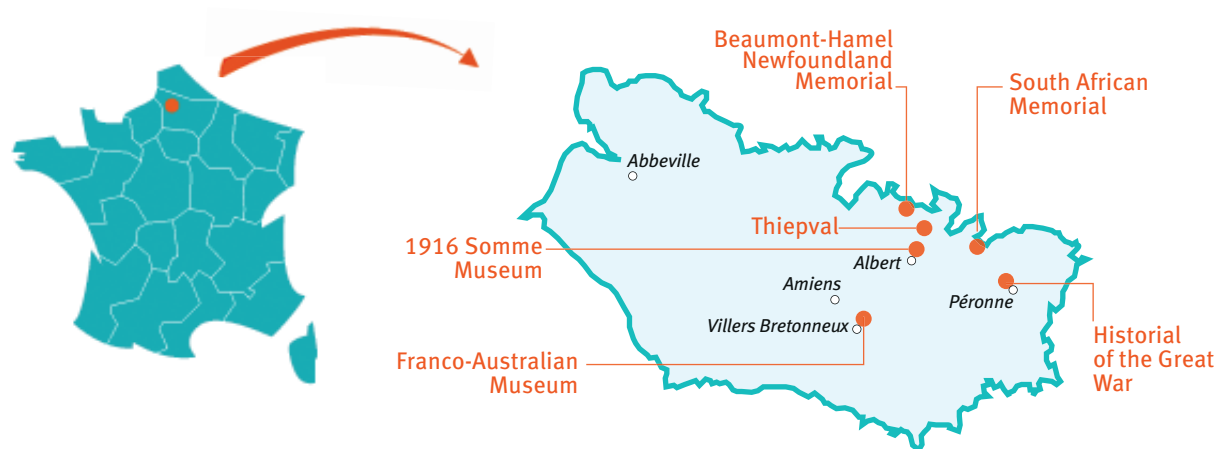
### The Battle of the Somme, an international area

In 1916, the Somme department became an international zone, a place where people of roughly twenty nationalities came to fight and work, originating from the 3 empires involved (France, Germany and Great Britain).

The battle of the Somme (1 July-18 November 1916) was a joint Franco-British offensive, one of the largest battles of the Great War. It was both industrial and international, and in four and a half months caused more than a million losses (dead, injured, missing in action). The Battle was not only an international affair in 1918; it continued with the souvenirs brought back home by millions of men, and even continues to this day with memories of the war that are still very much alive, thanks to pilgrimages and commemorative monuments.

### A territory strewn with monuments paying homage to the allies

**The Circuit of Remembrance** brings together the 2 towns that symbolise the Great War; Albert and Péronne. It enables visitors to discover and understand this terrible episode of international history. **The Historial of the Great War** gives an introduction to the Circuit of Remembrance. This outstanding museum compares and objectively examines the painful experiences of the 3 main warring parties according to historical chronology.



The German occupation of the town of **Péronne** began in August 1914, and it immediately became a centre for intense military and logistical activity, particularly during the Battle of the Somme. Although it was bombarded by the French artillery for 8 months, it remained in the hands of the Germans, who only evacuated Péronne in March 1917, when they fell back to the Hindenburg line. The town was occupied once again in March 1918, and then liberated on 2 September by the Australian 2nd division.

The village of **Rancourt**, a few kilometres from Péronne, is where the main German supply and communication line was broken: the road from Bapaume to Péronne. Today the village has the sad and unique privilege of having a **French, a British and a German cemetery**. The **French Chapel of Remembrance** is also an important place for remembrance of French participation in the Battle of the Somme.

## Homage to South-African and Australian allies

The capture of Bois Delville at **Longueval** was vital to allow progress towards the east, and this mission was assigned to the South Africans. They went through this baptism of fire on the Western Front from 15 to 20 July 1916. Of the 4,000 men in the brigade only 143 emerged unharmed from their trenches. **The South African National Memorial and Museum** pay homage to all the South Africans who fell during various 20th century conflicts, in Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

To the north-west, the **village of Pozières** represented a blockage that had to be removed in order to occupy Thiepval hill. This objective was partly assigned to the Australian troops. They had arrived on 23 July 1916, and after taking control of Pozières, the exhausted Australians were relieved on 5 September by the Canadians. Three of their divisions lost more than a third of their forces. As for the village, it completely disappeared. The **monument to the 1st division, the remains of the “Gibraltar” and the “Windmill”** bear witness to this battle.



*Longueval South African National Memorial and Museum*

## Homage to the British, Irish and Newfoundland allies

The nearby **hill and village of Thiepval** were one of the pillars of the German defences near the northern part of the British sector; and on 1 July 1916 proved to be one of the main theatres of the disaster suffered by the British army. The fighting to take **Thiepval** began on 1 July and ended on 26 September 1916.



*Memorial to the Missing Thiepval*

In 1932 the British government decided to erect the **Memorial to the Missing** at Thiepval, an imposing brick and stone monument 45 m high, designed by the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. It is the largest British war memorial in the world. It commemorates the 72,205 men of the British and South African armies who died or were reported as missing in action between July 1915 and March 1918.

The 36th Irish division was the only unit to achieve its objective, on 1 July. But it was caught in crossfire from the British artillery's creeping barrage and the German machine guns. After losing more than 5,500 men in just a few hours, the division had to evacuate the next day. **The Ulster Tower** erected in 1921 is an exact replica of a tower near Belfast on land belonging to the 36th division. It is the Irish monument for the Battle of the Somme, and is also the memorial for all the soldiers of Ulster who fell during the Great War.

At the time of the war, Newfoundland was a British colony, and as such it raised an army of volunteers. On 1 July 1916, at 7.30 am. the men of the Newfoundland regiment had barely climbed out of their trenches when they were caught in the fire from German machine guns. Half an hour later, only 68 uninjured soldiers remained. In proportion to the forces engaged, this action was one of the most deadly of the Somme offensive. In memory of this tragedy, Newfoundland decided to erect its **national memorial to the missing** at Beaumont-Hamel.

On 1 July 1916, at La Boisselle, ten minutes before the infantry assault, several explosions designed to break through the 1st German line dug deep craters into the ground. **Lochnagar Crater** is 100 metres in diameter and 30 metres deep, and can be visited to this day.



*Thiepval Ulster Tower*



## PICARDY - Somme, the circuit of remembrance *Cont.*

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### The British at the heart of the Battle

The town of **Albert** was occupied by the Germans from 29 August to 14 September 1914 and then evacuated after the **Battle of the Marne**. It was shelled constantly July 1915 the British army relieved the French army. The town then became a centre of intense military activity, and remained a symbolic town for the British. When it was taken once more by the Germans in March 1918, and then again by the British in August, nothing remained except a vast field of ruins.

The **1916 Somme Museum** invites visitors to discover the life of soldiers in the trenches during the offensive of 1 July 1916, in a series of former underground shelters, 250 metres long at a depth of 10 metres.

A railway line was built in 1916 to transport supplies to the artillery trenches for the Battle of the Somme. Nowadays, the **“P’tit train” of Haute Somme**, drawn by steam or diesel locomotives, takes visitors from Froissy along the banks of the Somme river.

### Homage to the Australian and New Zealand allies

In the area of Amiens, the village of **Villers-Bretonneux** became part of military history on 24 April 1918, when the Australian troops definitively brought the German March offensive to a halt.

Since the building of the Victoria school in 1927 and the inauguration of the **National Australian memorial** in 1938, the official and informal links between the residents of Villers-Bretonneux and the Australian people have become ever stronger. This is where the Anzac Day Dawn Service is celebrated every year on 25 April. This ceremony pays homage to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps which offered such distinguished service in the Battles of Picardy in 1918.

The **Franco-Australian Museum** inaugurated on 25 April 1975 is on the first floor of the Victoria school. It tells the story of the Australian expeditionary force during the First World War, and in particular on the Western Front in 1918. In the school playground, in addition to an **Australian fresco in the Aborigine style**, there is an inscription on the wall “Do not forget Australia”.



*Villers-Bretonneux National  
Australian Memorial*

### Find out more:

**[www.somme-battlefields.com](http://www.somme-battlefields.com)**

Somme Tourist Board: **[www.visit-somme.com](http://www.visit-somme.com)**

### Don't miss

**Late 2013** – A brand new mobile application will be available on AppStore and Google Play - **Victoria Cross – The heroes' journey**. It will present 3 discovery trails in the Aisne and Somme areas, in French and English.

**[www.somme-battlefields.com](http://www.somme-battlefields.com)**

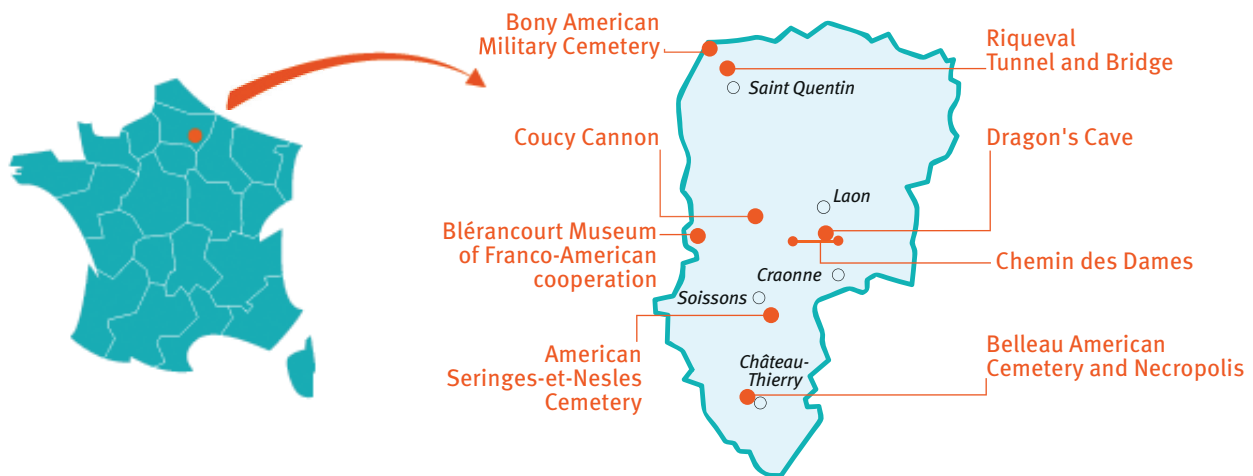
**May 2014** – Launch of the mobile application on the Circuit of Remembrance.

**[www.somme-battlefields.com](http://www.somme-battlefields.com)**



## PICARDY - Aisne 1914-1918

From the area around Saint-Quentin to Château-Thierry, in Aisne there are many places of remembrance relating to the First World War. Starting with the first clashes in 1914, then the terrible offensive of Chemin des Dames in 1917 and finally the 1918 German offensive, tens of thousands of men from all walks of life lost their lives in Aisne in the hope of a better world. The many monuments, cemeteries, galleries, etc. show that this land has not forgotten its painful and tragic past, and the sharp emotions aroused by these places where so many men fell. Today Aisne pays homage to them.



### Chemin des Dames

On 14 September 1914, thanks to the British, the front was established along a road called **Chemin des Dames**. It subsequently became the theatre for numerous offensives: General Nivelle's offensive in April 1917 and the German offensive of May 1918 were the most notable. Today Chemin des Dames is an open-air museum, marked out with monuments paying homage to the African infantrymen, the British troops, the Basque regiments, and also to the German troops. On **California Plateau** stands a bronze sculpture by Haim Kern nearly four metres high, entitled **"They did not choose their grave"**.



*Chemin des Dames-Constellation of pain*



*Chemin des Dames observation tower*

A stone's throw away lie the **ruins of the village of Craonne**, occupied in 1914, destroyed in 1917 by large-scale shelling and known for the famous song of Craonne, associated with the mutinies that took place following the terrible French offensive.

In the forest you can still see remains of the trenches, and a wooden **observation tower** gives visitors a view of the valleys of Aisne and the Ailette. It also clearly shows why this steeply sloping terrain was so important for troop movements.

## PICARDY - Aisne 1914-1918 *Cont.*

A little further west, the **Caverne du Dragon (Dragon's Cave), Chemin des Dames Museum**, is an old limestone quarry lying 14 metres underground, converted into a underground barracks during the conflict. This site is not to be missed, as it gives a poignant presentation of how soldiers lived.

A few kilometres away, the **rebuilt village of Cerny-en-Laonnois** today is the location of French and German military cemetery, a chapel of remembrance, and a British monument paying homage to the "Lancashire lads".



*Caverne du Dragon*

### The occupation



*Monument to the 6 Vingré soldiers*

Beyond Chemin des Dames, the whole of the Soissonnais plateau was a place where appalling battles and terrible injustices took place, as commemorated by the **monument to the 6 Vingré soldiers shot by firing squad** in homage to these soldiers executed on 4 December 1914, and whose names were cleared in 1921.

From September 1914 onwards, the German army occupied the towns north of the front, resulting in a mass exodus of the civilian population. The towns of **Saint-Quentin, Laon** and **Coucy-Le-Château**

were used as staff headquarters and railway platforms to replace equipment. The shop fronts were given German names. The **Fort of Condé** was requisitioned for use as a military hospital.

In 1915, in complete secrecy, the German army installed the long-range **Coucy cannon** capable of reaching targets 25 or 30 km away, which were Compiègne, Villers-Cotterêts and Oulchy-le-Château, the 3 towns supplying the French front.

In 1916, after the First Battle of the Somme, the Germans prepared to fall back to a fortified line built behind the front. The 138 km **Hindenburg line of defence** started at its northern apex at Vimy, passed south-west of Cambrai via St-Quentin, through the region of the **Saint-Gobain forest** and ended near Vailly-sur-Aisne. In March 1917, the German armed forces fell back to the Hindenburg line, having first destroyed entire towns and villages, including the **medieval keep at Coucy-le-Château**.

## Homage to the allied troops

In Spring 1918, the US troops arrived as reinforcements around Château Thierry, as shown by the impressive monument of **Côte 204, the Belleau Remembrance Museum, the Belleau wood museum and its American cemetery**. This place bears the marks of terrible fighting (remains of trenches and shell craters). The **cemetery of Oise-Aisne de Seringes-et-Nesle**, near Fère-en-Tardenois, is built on the land where the American 42nd division, known as the “**Rainbow Division**”, fought. Among the 6,012 graves is that of the poet **Joyce Kilmer**.

In the village of Coulanges-Cohan stands a monumental fountain given by the Roosevelt family, to thank the residents for placing flowers on the grave of Quentin Roosevelt, the youngest **son of President Theodore Roosevelt**, killed on 14 July 1918.

The Second Battle of the Marne began on 15 July 1918, starting from the forest of Villers-Cotterêts. It became vital to take control of the ridge that overlooks the northern bank of the river Ourcq. The pink granite monument at **Butte Chalmont, the Ghosts of Landowski**, pays homage to the thousands of allied soldiers (Italian, British, American and French), who participated in the assault on 18 July 1918, to dislodge the German forces.



*Memorial of the American 42nd division*

After a series of offensives and counter-offensives in March 1918, it was not until September 1918 that the allies began the assault on the **Hindenburg Line**. The Australian and British troops were in the front line and launched the assault. The final attack was launched on 29 September 1918 with the support of American units.



*Riqueval Bridge in 1918*

At the “**Somme-Aisne**” **American cemetery at Bony** lie 1,844 soldiers, some of whom were killed in the fighting of September-October 1918 to cross the Hindenburg line. A **monument to the memory of the Australian 4th division** is erected on the rise north-west of the town of Bellenglise, the place where they fought their last battle.

A few hours after the final attack, the American, Australian and British troops had taken over the **Riqueval tunnel**, heavily fortified by the Germans. They victoriously crossed Saint-Quentin canal on **Riqueval bridge**, the only bridge remaining intact, to continue their offensive in the direction of Montbrehain.



## PICARDY - Aisne 1914-1918 *Cont.*

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### The armistice and reconstruction

On 7 November 1918 at 8.20 pm, 4 cars carrying the German ministers tasked with negotiating an armistice arrived in the town of La Flamengrie, near La Capelle. The cease-fire was sounded, marking the beginning of the negotiations and the end of hostilities. A stone monument called **Pierre d'Haudroy**, was erected on this spot in memory of this event.

The armistice was finally signed at Compiègne on 11 November 1918.

After the Armistice, France brought together many bodies in the **German cemetery of Saint-Quentin**. Today, 8,229 bodies lie in this cemetery, financed and inaugurated by the Emperor Wilhelm II in 1915.

Once the fighting was over, Aisne was able to count on the work carried out by **Anne Morgan** and the American ladies of the American Committee for Devastated France (ACDF), based at the **château of Blérancourt**, who continued to assist the civilian population, distributing food, setting up schools, hospitals and libraries and looking after refugees.

Aisne had become an international area due to the war, and now called on the services of a workforce from many countries to begin the slow process of rebuilding. Workers from Indochina, Italy, Spain and Poland worked to clear the fields of shells, and raise up the ruins of this "flattened country" as it was described by the writer Roland Dorgelès.

### Find out more:

Aisne Tourist Board: **[www.evasion-aisne.com](http://www.evasion-aisne.com)**

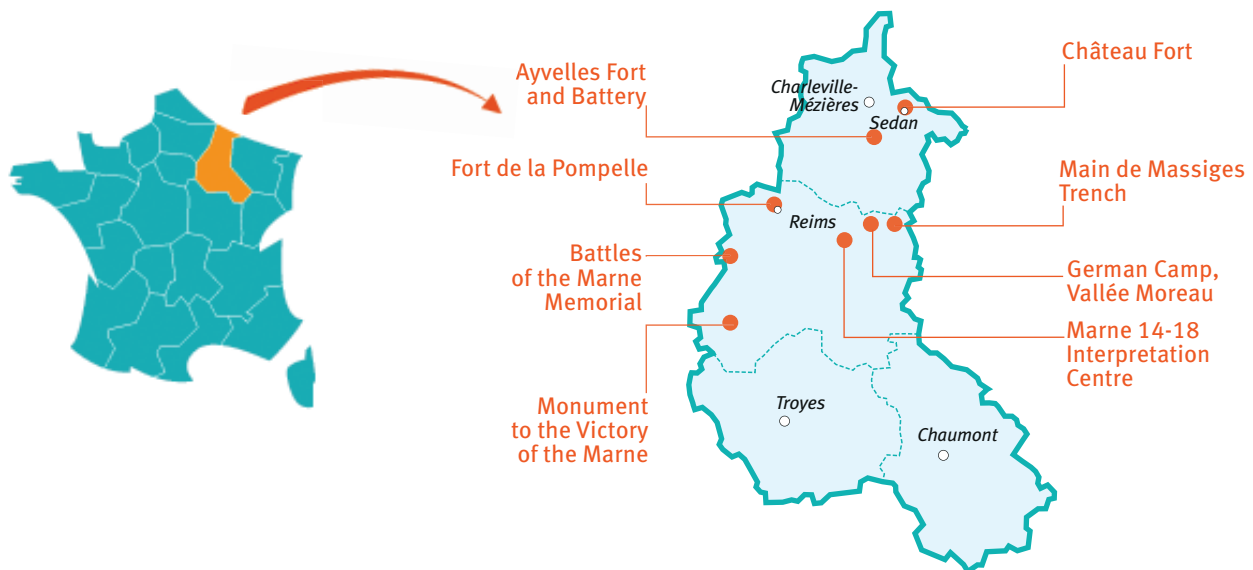
Picardy Regional Tourist Board: **[www.picardietourisme.com](http://www.picardietourisme.com)**



## Champagne-Ardenne

Northern Champagne was the setting for vicious fighting during WWI and the region is famous for the two battles of the Marne that took place in 1914 and 1918. Ardennes and the north-western corner of the department of the Marne remained under German occupation during the entire war. The Argonne Forest was the theatre of violent clashes and Reims suffered systematic shelling that inevitably ended in its destruction.

Today, many remnants of the conflict can still be seen. The landscapes of Champagne and have forever been marked by the bombs and trenches that scarred the land, as has the Ardennes area, now punctuated with vast necropolises and memorials erected in honour of soldiers from different nations.



The Treaty of Frankfurt of May 1871 once again shifted the border between France and Germany. The Champagne region was integrated into the fortified defence system designed by General Séré de Rivières and implemented between 1874 and 1880. From 1914 to 1918, northern Champagne once again became a battlefield.

Although the “progress” in weapons technology made for shorter-lived encounters, it vastly increased the amount of bloodshed and destruction. The departments of Ardennes and Marne were invaded in August and September of 1914. German forces crossed the Marne River, from Meaux to Vitry-le-François.

### First Battle of the Marne

The First Victory of the Marne (5 to 12 September 1914) pushed the Germans to retreat north of Soissons and Reims. The front then stabilised, changing only slightly in 1915 and 1917 at the cost of thousands of dead and injured soldiers until the major German offensive in the spring of 1918. The victorious Germans reached the Marne River once again, between Château-Thierry and Epemay. The First Battle of the Marne caused destruction in the southern part of the department, where the armies clashed directly.

## Champagne-Ardenne *Cont.*

### War of attrition

The war of attrition warfare that ensued for four years removed almost all life from the strip of land that survivors quickly began to call “The Red Zone”.

Some hills were lowered and streams diverted from their course. Forests were reduced to a few shattered trunks and villages decimated by artillery were permanently wiped off the map, although their names have been attached to neighbouring villages that were spared.

Further east, **numerous Argonne memorial sites** honour the offensives of August and September 1914, the battles in the thick Argonne Forest in 1914 and 1915, and the offensive of 1918.

The **Camp de la Vallée Moreau** in Vienne-le-Château is a remarkably well-restored German military camp.



*Camp de la Vallée Moreau German military camp*

### Second Battle of the Marne

The Second Battle of the Marne (15 to 18 July 1918) resulted in the liberation of almost all of occupied Champagne (to Mézières and Sedan) before the Armistice of 11 November.

The battle took place in the western part of the department and caused much more devastation than the First Battle of the Marne. The development of artillery by both camps and knowledge of what was at stake brought the battle to an unprecedented level of violence. In just a few weeks, the villages lining the route of German resistance against the Allied Army counteroffensive were also destroyed. Their monuments, churches and castles suffered irreparable damage, with mechanised warfare seeing the first use of tanks and bomber planes in battle.



*The Main de Massiges site*

### End of the conflict and reconstruction

In 1918, when hostilities had come to an end, Champagne was a true battlefield: temporary railway lines and makeshift sorting stations in the middle of nowhere, millions of tangled and overlapping shell craters, trenches suffocating beneath the artificial brambles of snarled barbed wire and metal stakes.

Though restored, the **Main de Massiges** site has remained unchanged with its 1914-1915 mine holes and trenches.



*Fort de la Pompelle*

The makeshift tombs, where the soldiers on both sides buried their fallen comrades as best as they could, had not yet been dug. The bodies of those who were never returned to their families were yet to find a final resting place in the vast military cemeteries along the former front line that have become so familiar to those living in the devastated Champagne countryside. The largest include the **Crouée Necropolis** in Souain-Perthes-les-Hurlus, which is the final resting place for more than 30,000 bodies on a 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> plot of land, and **Marfée** in Noyers-Pont-Maugis.

Many historical sites and monuments commemorate the relentless combats as well as the day-to-day living of the war: Fort de la **Pompelle**, the only fort of the Séré de Rivières system to have been set on fire, **Fort des Ayvelles (and battery)**, or the fortified **Château de Sedan** in the Ardennes.

Eighty per cent of the city of **Reims** was destroyed by German bombing. Its Notre-Dame Cathedral, first damaged by fire in September 1914, bears the harrowing scars of four years of war.

The survivors made it their mission to rebuild and repair. Old restored homes are therefore juxtaposed with new buildings that reflect the architectural style of the 1920s and 1930s. Beside churches entirely rebuilt in clear neo-Romanesque or neo-Gothic style, many buildings were scrupulously restored to their previous state.

The Battles were been forgotten. In Mondement, the **Monument to the Victory of the Marne** is a huge pillar sculptured with the effigies of the commanding generals of the battle. In Dormans, the **Battles of the Marne Memorial** is a chapel and ossuary that holds the remains of a thousand soldiers of different nationalities.



## Champagne-Ardenne *Cont.*

### Monuments to Allied troops

At the end of the war, monuments dedicated to the dead were erected with the names of fallen soldiers and sometimes the names of war victims: those shot down in 1914, bombing victims or those deported from villages occupied by the enemy.

Most of the remembrance monuments resemble other standard models but several are quite unique, as in the case of the **Monument aux Héros de l'Armée Noire** (monument dedicated to South, Central and East African troops) in Reims. At Sommepey-Tahure, the **Blanc-Mont American Monument**, with its panoramic view from the summit, commemorates the 6,000 American soldiers that fell in Champagne and Argonne.

At Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand, a Russian **orthodox chapel** with white walls and blue and gold onion domes commemorates the 6,100 Russian soldiers that fell in France during the Great War.



*Russian orthodox chapel*



*Navarin Monument to the Dead*

In Souain-Perthes-les-Hurlus, the **Navarin Monument to the Dead** is a vast pyramid containing a crypt and ossuary with the bodies of more than 10,000 soldiers of various nationalities.

Interpretation centres such as the **Centre Marne 14-18** in Suippes, located on the Champagne front, help provide an understanding of the conflict and historical sites.

### Find out more:

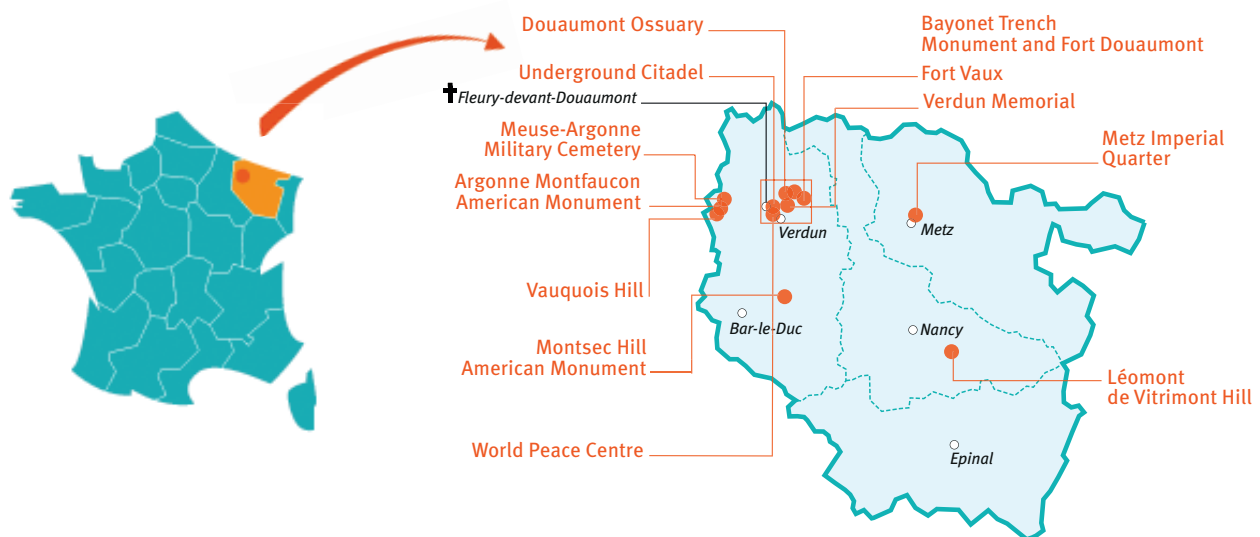
Regional Tourist Board of Champagne-Ardenne: [www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com](http://www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com)

Council and Tourist Board of the Marne: [www.lamarne14-18.com](http://www.lamarne14-18.com)

## Lorraine: Verdun, epicentre of Lorraine Battles of 3 Frontiers

As the world capital of the Great War, Verdun is the symbol of violent battles that raged in Lorraine throughout the entire conflict. From August 1914 to November 1918, Lorraine became a blood-soaked ground where hundreds of thousands of soldiers perished.

From the Vosges, the only mountain front in France, to Verdun, to the annexed Metz and Nancy (which remained French), Lorraine still bears the marks of the Great War. Today, the scarred land is an exceptional conservatory of the sites and remnants that testify to the battles that were fought there.



### Beginning of the conflict

Although it was a world war, the conflict had unique features in Lorraine due to its geographic location and the annexation of Metz and Moselle, which had been German territories from 1870 to 1918 following the Franco-Prussian War.

Before the bloody clashes of Verdun, France and Germany had already clashed numerous times in the Vosges mountains and around Nancy, beginning in 1914. The **Battle of Grand Couronné** included fighting in Lunéville and Léomont, not far from Nancy. After changing hands eight times in one night, the French took control of the hill to win their first victory of the War.

Fighting in Le Grand Couronné and particularly Bois-le-Prêtre Forest was so violent that the Germans nicknamed the forest "The Widows' Forest" and French soldiers the "Wolves of Bois-le-Prêtre" due to the fierce and relentless fighting.

### Verdun – Meuse, historic land

In September 1914, the Germans succeeded in advancing inside the French lines in an attempt to besiege Verdun. This formed what would be called the **Saint Mihiel Salient**, which stretched from the Eparges to Pont-à-Mousson, through Saint Mihiel.

The **Eparges Ridge** still bears the scars of the terrible fighting of 1915. The Calonne Trench, where writers such as Jean Giono and Alain Fournier met, was also in the area.



## Lorraine: Verdun, epicentre of Lorraine Battles of 3 Frontiers *Cont.*

During the fighting of 1916, Verdun lived up to its motto “They shall not pass”. With 300 days and 300 nights of non-stop fighting, 300,000 French and German dead and missing, 400,000 wounded, 9 villages wiped off the map, this head-on confrontation was the most deadly in history. Seventeen nations honoured the city after the war by giving it their highest distinction and naming it “**Capital of the Great War**”.

The rich authenticity of the remain and sites of the battlefields of Verdun form a unique heritage. These include, for example, **Fort Douaumont**, the cornerstone of the fortifications protecting the city of Verdun, or **Fort Vaux**, symbol of the heroism of Verdun infantrymen.

The **Underground Citadel** of Verdun, an underground city organised to shelter and meet the daily needs of 2,000 men, played a major role during the Battle of 1916. It was from here that the Unknown Soldier was chosen in November 1920 to be placed to rest under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

In Argonne, prominent for the use of mines, the **Vauquois Hill** is the best example of underground “living” quarters. The well-exhibited and well-kept site make it a major site in Lorraine. It is where the Germans built the “**Kaiser Tunnel**”, equipping it with power generators and a field hospital.

Finally, the “Voie Sacrée” (the “Sacred Way”), is an historic and emblematic strategic road behind the French front lines during the Great War that connects Bar-le-Duc to Verdun. It was a vital logistical corridor serving Verdun and wasn't given its name until after the war by the writer Maurice Barrès. During the War, on average, one vehicle passed through it every 13 seconds.

Behind the German front line, examples of installations that remain include the Duzey Battery and “Big Bertha”, a twenty-tonne long-range howitzer naval gun that fired 380 mm shells, or Camp Marguerre, the final resting place of German soldiers that was also used for concrete manufacturing and storage.

### In remembrance

Besides numerous cemeteries, there are various sites in the Lorraine that are dedicated to remembrance of the Great War. For instance, the **Centre Mondial de la Paix, des Libertés et des Droits de l'Homme** (World Centre for Peace, Liberty and Human Rights), located in the prestigious episcopal palace of Verdun, is a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation, a driving force behind European integration.



*World Centre for Peace, Liberty and Human Rights*

In 1984, echoing the 1958 meeting of De Gaulle and Adenauer, the handshake between Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand sealed closer ties between France and Germany, the two pillars of the European Union. In addition to battlefield tours, the Centre also programs rich temporary art and/or history exhibitions.

Each year, the **Monument to the Victory and Soldiers of Verdun** is the scene of annual ceremonies for the Armistice and the Selection of the Unknown Soldier. On the battlefield, the **Verdun Memorial**, created under the patronage of the veteran Maurice Genevoix in 1967, retells the history of the most famous battle of the Great War. The site is set to reopen in November 2015 following major renovation work.



Douaumont Ossuary

Nearby, the remains of 130,000 unidentified French and German soldiers lie in the **Douaumont Ossuary** that preserves their memory.

The **Bayonet Trench Monument**, built by an American patron, was inspired by the legend of French soldiers who were buried alive in their trench under heavy bombardment.

In memory of American involvement in the Great War, the United States erected the **Montsec Hill American Monument in 1932. It commemorates the offensive of the 1st American Army in September 1918 and the achievements of soldiers who fought until 1918. Montsec hill offers a magnificent panoramic view of Madine Lake and the Meuse hills.**

In addition, the Romagne-sous-Montfaucon American Cemetery and Memorial is the largest American cemetery in Europe with 14,246 crosses on the graves of American soldiers that fell while fighting to liberate the Meuse-Argonne area. The Montfaucon American Monument in Argonne was erected by the American Battle Monuments Commission to honour the 28,000 Americans who fought to retake Montfaucon hill on 26 and 27 September 1918. At the time, it was the largest battle in American history.



Montsec Hill American Monument

### Find out more:

#### Websites:

[www.tourisme-lorraine.fr](http://www.tourisme-lorraine.fr)  
[www.tourisme-meuse.com](http://www.tourisme-meuse.com) and [www.verdun-meuse.fr](http://www.verdun-meuse.fr)  
[www.tourisme-meurtheetmoselle.fr](http://www.tourisme-meurtheetmoselle.fr)  
[www.moselle-tourisme.com](http://www.moselle-tourisme.com)  
[www.front-vosges-14-18.fr](http://www.front-vosges-14-18.fr)

#### Video links

Lorraine Regional Tourist Board:

[www.dailymotion.com/video/xeawny\\_voyage-au-coeur-de-la-lorraine-temo\\_travel](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xeawny_voyage-au-coeur-de-la-lorraine-temo_travel)

Meuse Tourist Board: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ7paGOCImQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ7paGOCImQ)

#### Brochures available for download

Lorraine: [www.calameo.com/read/000239721a219b238e5b5](http://www.calameo.com/read/000239721a219b238e5b5)

Vosges: [www.tourismevosges.fr/fr/sites-de-memoires-vosges.php](http://www.tourismevosges.fr/fr/sites-de-memoires-vosges.php)

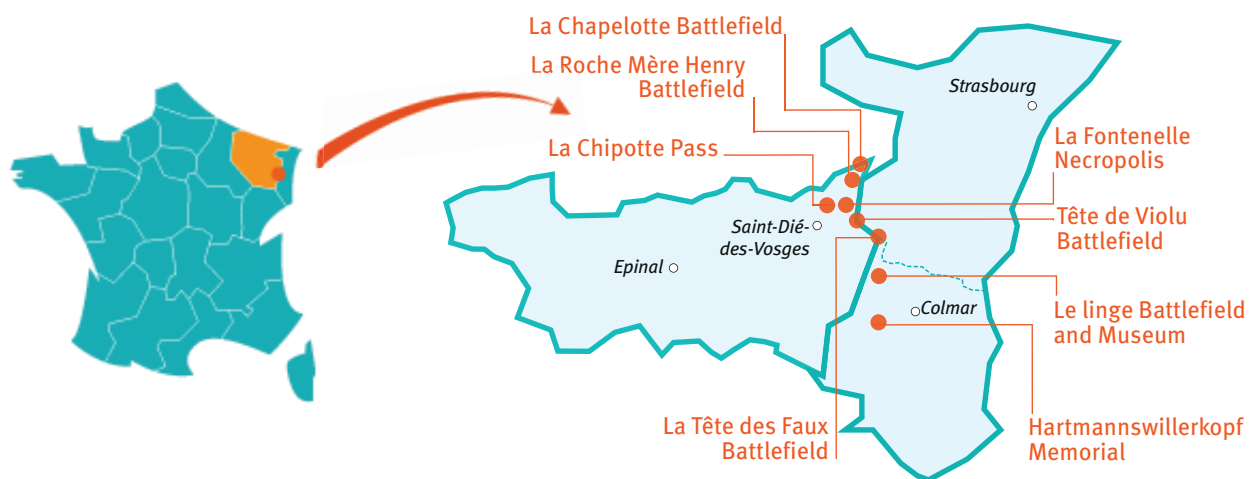
Meurthe-et-Moselle: [www.tourisme-meurtheetmoselle.fr/fr/Communique-de-presse,17/Communique-de-presse---Brochure-sur-le-Centenaire-de-la-Grande-Guerre,695](http://www.tourisme-meurtheetmoselle.fr/fr/Communique-de-presse,17/Communique-de-presse---Brochure-sur-le-Centenaire-de-la-Grande-Guerre,695)

Meuse: [www.tourisme-meuse.com/fr/26/7/2/0/sit/index/brochures-et-documents-meuse-lorraine-tourisme?reloadform=1](http://www.tourisme-meuse.com/fr/26/7/2/0/sit/index/brochures-et-documents-meuse-lorraine-tourisme?reloadform=1)

## The Great War on the Vosges Front

The Vosges Front is a mountainous area ranging from the Donon in the north and the Grand Ballon in the south. The old border between the German Empire and France from 1871 to 1918, now in Alsace and the Lorraine, **was the only area of the Western Front to see mountain fighting during the Great War.**

With transportation infrastructure and technology, impacts on the landscape and strategic challenges related to climate and geographic constraints, the Vosges mountains were the scene of numerous battlefields that now make it a genuine open-air museum.



### A unique mountain warfare site

Under the Treaty of Frankfurt in May 1871, Alsace and part of Lorraine were annexed by the German Empire. These “lost” provinces inspired rich patriotic and nationalist literature, amplifying a source for revenge and giving rise to one of the secondary objectives of the First World War.

On 4 August 1914, the French army received the order to march on Alsace to seize the main towns and valleys. Mulhouse was occupied on 8 August, evacuated the next day and retaken on the 17th, before being definitively abandoned on the 25th.

Munster was invaded by French troops on 17 August and evacuated on 3 September, with scouts even making their way to the doorstep of Colmar.

After the initial phase of manoeuvre warfare, the front stabilised during October and November 1914. The Saint-Amarin and Masevaux valleys remained under French control.

In the Vosges of Lorraine, the lines were determined by the border ridge (Violu), natural observatories (la Fontenelle, la Tête des Faux) or strategic positions (Chapelotte, Roche Mère Henry).

After the front was established on 12 September 1914 on **Fontenelle Hill**, a pre-war nursery school, the Germans and French found themselves in a head-on confrontation. A war of mines began in July 1915, while on the surface, a series of “coups de main” surprise attacks replaced the tactic of mass attacks. The remains of a remarkable iron observation ladder; the only one known to exist on the entire front, are still visible.



## Major memorial sites

With the frontline originating at the Swiss border near Kilometre Zero, the Vosges mountains are overlooked by a mighty rocky spur that overlooks the plain of Alsace, the **Hartmannswillerkopf**, one of four national monuments dedicated to the Great War.

The French and Germans fought hard over this observation post. In 1915 alone, the peak changed hands 4 times. Fighting on this battlefield continued throughout the entire war, devastating it under the effects of shells, poison gas and flamethrowers. The success of a French offensive on the Mulhouse region was contingent on conquering the peak. The exact number of dead will never be known but at least 30,000 soldiers perished in fighting. A memorial crypt holding the remains of 12,000 unknown soldiers now honours them.



*Altar of the nation at Hartmannswillerkopf*

The oldest house in the village of Uffholtz, built in 1581, has been turned into a **Memorial Centre in Uffholtz**. Visiting it can be a precious step before exploring the “man-eating” mountain and the largest historical site of the Vosges Massif.



*Memorial Centre in Uffholtz*

Inaugurated in 1973 in Saint-Amarin, the **Serret Museum** resides in an old courthouse that was used as an Alsatian mobile hospital. Today it contains extensive documentation on the battles and living conditions of soldiers.

Following the old front line to Vallée Noble is the largest Romanian military cemetery in France, the **Soultzmatt Romanian Cemetery**, inaugurated in 1924 by King Ferdinand and Queen Marie of Romania.



*Musée Serret de Saint-Amarin*

Between 20 July and 15 October 1915, a particularly deadly battle took place on the Linge Battlefield (17,000 soldiers died), followed by a warfare of attrition until 11 November 1918. This battlefield is classified as a historical site and is remarkable in that the well-preserved infrastructure of the solid German defence system and the vestiges of the loose soil trenches built by the French are stirring examples of trench warfare. The **Linge Memorial Museum** exhibits French and German objects that have been found on the site: weapons, ammunition, personal items and relics.

In order to bring first aid as close to the front as possible, in July 1915, the French army set up an **alpine ambulance in Mittlach** in the village of **Mittlach**, which was then back in French hands. This field hospital, now a museum, pays tribute to the lesser-known battles near Metzeral in June 1915 and the memory of General Serret and Colonel Boussat, who fell at Hartmannswillerkopf in December 1915.

## The Great War on the Vosges Front *Cont.*

In 1914, the Germans occupied the **Tête des Faux** peak, culminating at 1,220 metres. The Christmas Battle of 1914, fought under harsh winter conditions, resulted in 600 casualties in a single night.

However, the Germans built impressive fortifications that kept the situation at a stalemate until the Armistice.

Further along the old trench line, the **Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines Pass** is a border station between France and Germany that was controlled by the Germans from 1914. The surrounding peaks of **Bernhardstein, Tête du Violu and Côte 607** became the theatre of a latent war:



*Tête des Faux*



*Fontenelle Cemetery*

The **Saint-Dié-des-Vosges Museum** is home to some exceptional items related to 1914-1918 military history. Ten display cases show uniforms, weapons, ammunition and documents from the Battle of Meurthe and battles at La Chipotte. A rare collection also recounts the famous exploits of flying aces Fonck and Guynemer.

In the Hure Valley, attrition warfare was used in a fight to gain control of the Fontenelle hills and quickly transitioned into a war of mines. A monument was inaugurated in 1925 near the **cemetery where 2,348 French soldiers have been laid to rest.**

From 28 August to 9 September 1914, **La Chipotte Pass** was the scene of hand-to-hand combat. Control of it switched between the French and Germans five times, killing 4,000 French soldiers who nicknamed it the "Hell Hole". This French victory and that of the Marne helped crush the German invasion plan and the war of movement transformed into attrition warfare. **La Chipotte Cemetery** is a reminder of the heroic sacrifice of French soldiers.





Roche Mère Henry Belvedere

In September 1914, the Germans set up camp near Moyenmoutier in the Val de Senones, the former capital of the Principality of Salm. Perched on a cliff, **Roche Mère Henry promontory** was attacked by the French several times until January 1915.

At the north end of the military contingent, between the Donon and Raon-l'Etape peaks, **La Chapelotte is the last remaining monument that commemorates of the war of mines in the Vosges**. In 1914-1918, some positions reached 120 metres deep.

The Germans built impressive fortifications in the soft sandstone rocks. These exploits can be seen at the **Centre d'Interprétation et de Documentation 1914-1918** in Pierre-Percée.

**Find out more:**

**[www.front-vosges-14-18.eu](http://www.front-vosges-14-18.eu)**



Entrance to the La Chapelotte gallery





## 5 APPENDICES

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### **Atout France, France Tourism Development Agency**

With 83 million international visitors, generating €35.8 billion of tourist revenue in 2012, tourism is a major industry for France, making up 7.12% of its GDP. Atout France was established in 2009 with the aim of promoting the development of this sector, and pursues this objective through various projects:

#### **Observing and analysing the tourist market**

The Agency runs ongoing and in-depth market watch and analysis programmes on the international tourist. This understanding both of supply and demand provides a comprehensive overview of the state of world tourist markets, which helps define the major strategic orientations required for the development of French tourism.

#### **Enhancing and marketing the French tourist offer**

Atout France offers its expertise in tourist engineering with the aim of making businesses more competitive and destinations more attractive. The Agency also supports over 1 100 professional partners (regional and departmental tourist Committees, local Tourist Boards and over 800 private businesses) in their marketing and tourism promotion efforts in France and around the world. More than 2000 promotional campaigns are run every year, targeting the general public, professionals, and the press.

#### **Optimising quality of services**

Atout France runs some specific projects that aim to improve the quality of tourist offerings. This involves rating tourist accommodation, managing the registration of travel operators but also monitoring and promoting labels like "Vignobles & Découvertes" for wine tourism.

#### **A local, national and international sphere of activity**

Atout France works internationally through a network of 35 offices across 32 countries. This unique organisational system, which employs more than 250 people, provides the agency with a perfect understanding of international markets and cultures and enables it to successfully target and communicate the activities of its partners, from project design to marketing and sales.

#### **Find out more at:**

**[www.atout-france.fr](http://www.atout-france.fr)** or **[www.rendezvousenfrance.com](http://www.rendezvousenfrance.com)**

### **The Centenary Mission**

The French government has assigned the First World War Centenary Mission the task of preparing and supporting implementation of the Centenary commemoration programme. Its job will be to organise the most important events in the commemorative calendar; to support and coordinate the initiatives taken throughout France, and finally to define a public communication strategy to raise awareness about the Centenary preparations and programme.

More than 1,000 projects in France and abroad have been awarded official Centenary accreditation. The Mission's Internet portal, [www.centenaire.org](http://www.centenaire.org), is designed to be a veritable digital resource centre, and provides the general public with real-time information, in three languages, about Centenary preparations.

#### **Find out more at:**

**<http://centenaire.org/fr>**



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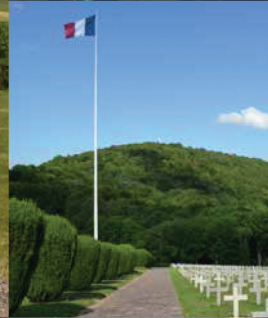
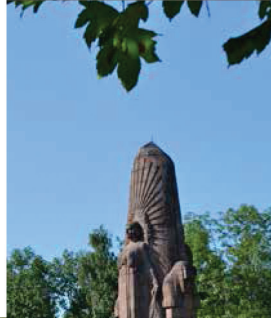
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14  
18



TIME  
TO  
REMEMBER

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1918

