

# BATTLE OF THE BULGE

## 75TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR



**December 9-18, 2019**

**\$3,990 per person based on double occupancy**

**\$800 single occupancy supplement if rooming alone**

Addressing the first officer candidate class to graduate from Fort Benning in September 1941, Chief of Staff of the Army George C. Marshall reminded the citizen-soldiers turned officers that “the real leader displays his quality in his triumphs over adversity, however great, it may be.” And nowhere during World War II was this demonstrated more clearly than during the month-long Battle of the Bulge, which was the largest American land battle of the war and, in the words of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, an ever great American Victory.

Seventy-five years later, what most people recognize about the battle is the 101st Airborne Division’s epic eight-day defense of Bastogne. As any veteran of the Ardennes will tell you, however, it was much more than that. On the morning of December 16, 1944, a

well-equipped force of a half-million Germans fell unsuspectingly along a thinly held front along the Belgian frontier. Adolf Hitler hoped that the three armies he committed to his all-or-nothing offensive would crack the Western Front wide-open, split the Allies in two and seize the vital port of Antwerp. If the attack succeeded, victory in Europe would be delayed for at least another year and Hitler might have the time he needed to bring his “wonder weapons” on line and complete the awful work of the Final Solution. It might even have caused a war weary Soviet Union to sue for peace. To the barely 80,000 Americans that found themselves in the midst of this deluge, the Führer’s ultimate objectives were unimportant; what mattered was survival in some of the most horrific combat conditions imaginable.



With the passage of time, it is easy to think that it was elite troops like the 82nd and 101st Airborne divisions that made such a victory possible, but it was not. A great many of the units that fought in the Ardennes were untested in combat, their officers and men part of the massive training effort devised and overseen by General Marshall. It was citizen-soldiers and the “90 Day Wonders” who led them that ultimately won the battle, and it was the leadership lessons these men had been taught in boot-camp and officer’s candidate school that had made the difference between victory and defeat.

A Time of Trials will take a detailed look at these men and the German soldiers who opposed them. Each stop will provide a chance to analyze the decisions-right and wrong-that officers on both sides made under the most stressful conditions imaginable. Participants will see how the young officers and enlisted men who had been through the Army’s training program made decisions that achieved a victory that would impact the lives of millions.

#### **Day 1, December 9 - Fly to Brussels**

Guests fly independently on an overnight flight to Brussels, Belgium. Book your flight to arrive in Brussels by 10 a.m on December 10.

#### **Day 2, December 10 - Arrive in Brussels**

Arrive in Brussels and gather at a designated meet-up location within the airport. From Brussels, we drive by motor coach to our tour hotel. We kick-off dinner with a lecture on the Ardennes Campaign and what was at stake for Axis and Allied leaders in the winter of 1944.

#### **Day 3, December 11- Malmedy**

When he was given his mission for the upcoming Ardennes offensive, SS Obersturmbannführer Joachim Peiper was told that terror was to be one of his weapons. For a man who had earned the nickname of “the blowtorch” in Russia, these were orders he relished. By the time his 5,000-man panzer force was stopped, they had cut a path of terror and destruction that left untold numbers of dead GIs and Belgian civilians in its path.

We will cross the same spot Peiper did 75 years ago and follow the exact route his armored column took through Lanzerath, where a baby-faced Lieutenant Lyle Bouck and 17 young Americans stood in his path, Bullingen, Baugnez and the site of the famous Malmedy massacre, Stavelot, Trois Pont, La Gleize and the December 44 museum, which features an original King Tiger tank.

#### **Day 4, December 12- Slaughter at St. Vith**

When Maj. Gen. Alan Jones, the commander of the green 106th Infantry Division, reported back to VIII Corps headquarters that prisoners taken in front of his positions along Skyline drive were warning of an impending offensive, he was told, "Don't be so jumpy, the Krauts are just playing phonograph records to scare you newcomers." At 5:30 a.m. the next morning, his men were deluged with incoming artillery fire and within minutes found themselves in the midst of the Fifth Panzer Army's main attack. For three days the 106th held off the Germans, but by the 19th it had been forced off Skyline Drive and in the largest mass surrender since Bataan; 8,000 of its men were forced to surrender.

We will start the day with a visit to St. Vith. We will then travel to Wallerode and its monument to a lone American officer who elderly villagers recall carried on his own single-handed war against the Germans for weeks. Then it is on to the 106th positions in the woods along Skyline Drive. We will visit extensive intact foxholes, bunkers and artillery emplacements, as well as the field where almost the entire 442 Infantry Regiment was forced to surrender.

#### **Day 5, December 13- Trading Lives for Time**

If it were not for the seven major roads that passed through it, Bastogne would have had no importance at all. It was because of these thoroughfares, however, that Eisenhower decided that the small Belgian farming community was one of the most important pieces of real estate along the entire Western Front. Holding it when the German offensive began were a few thousand troops assigned or attached to VIII Corps Headquarters; among which was a combat command of the 10th Armored Division. The stand these men made in the days before the 101st arrived remains one of World War II's most compelling tales of bravery and self-sacrifice. Without their lonely 48-hour stand, Bastogne, and possibly the war, would have been lost.



Our study of their bravery and heroics will begin in Bastogne itself with a special visit to the barracks that served as Troy Middleton's headquarters at the start of

the battle and eventually served as home to Anthony McAuliffe, the 101st's assistant division commander, and his staff during the siege. Our guests will have an opportunity to visit the cave where he gave his famous "Nuts!" answer to a German offer of surrender. Then it will be on to the impressive Mardasson Memorial. After this stop we will retrace the 16-mile defensive perimeter around the town, stopping along the way to explore the roadblock battles fought at places like Houffalize, Noville, Bourcy, Bizory, Longvilly and Marvie.



**Day 6, December 14 - The Hole in the Donut**

Through the sacrifice of their comrades in the 10th Armored Division, the troopers of the 101st Airborne Division were able to reach Bastogne in the nick of time and hold it for eight critical days. We will start at the village of Mandé St. Etienne, where the troopers of the 101st arrived after their breakneck drive from Reims. Next, we will visit the field where the Germans finally closed the last escape route out of Bastogne and captured the division's field hospital. From there we will travel to the fields outside of Hemroulle where, on Christmas Day, the troopers of the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment were forced to hunker down in their foxholes while enemy tanks passed directly overhead in an attack that almost defeated the Screaming Eagles. Our study of Bastogne's defense will end with the tanks of General George S. Patton's 4th Armored Division as they battle their way through a series of enemy roadblocks at Sibret and Assenois to reach the beleaguered defenders of the city and lift the siege.

**Day 7, December 15 - Crossing the Sauer**

Our day starts with in Diekirch to visit the location of the 5th Infantry Division's nighttime crossing of the Sauer River on January 18, 1945; this was the first American attack after the defeat of the German offensive and marked the start of the final offensive into the Reich. The rest of the afternoon will then be spent enjoying the phenomenal National Military Museum with its 1,500 square meters of exhibit space and renowned life-size dioramas. Our tour of the Ardennes will conclude, as it should, in Luxembourg City with a visit to the American and German cemeteries.

**Day 8, December 16 - Remembering**

We will spend the day participating in the many activities commemorating the 75th anniversary of the greatest American battle of World War II.

**Day 9, December 17 - Foy-Notre-Dame**

We will depart Luxembourg and head for Brussels. Along the way we will make one final visit, stopping in the village of Foy-Notre-Dame to see the very spot where the German's farthest westward advance was halted. We will have our farewell dinner at an airport hotel in Brussels.

**Day 10, December 18 - Home**

Morning dropoff at Brussels airport.

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**Tour includes:**

- Full-time, professional historian
- Touring by first class motorcoach
- One hotel through the first seven tour nights (final night in conveniently located airport hotel)
- All breakfasts, most dinners
- All entrance fees to museums & attractions.