BGES is Proud to Present, in Cooperation with
Old Country Tours:
“The Doughboys,
The American Expeditionary Force in World War I”
July 19-26, 2013

The Great War had been raging since 1914 when nearly 100 years of entangling alliances known as the “Concert of Europe” had dissolved with the assassination of a relatively low level nobleman in Serbia. With war declared, each country was compelled to honor its mutual defense pacts. Germany found itself largely alone with a tottering ally in the Czar of Russia. Other old and ancient empires proved to be paper shells of themselves. War on the Western Front, which later became the theme of a classic novel and movie (All Quiet on the Western Front), was the dominant feature of a brutal, bloody and largely inert pair of siege lines stretching across northern France and Belgium. The Von Schlieffen Plan had brought German military might into France where numbers, logistics and exhaustion degenerated into brutal, immoral trench warfare.

The United States had experienced its industrial revolution and was a prize sought by the combatants: its massed manpower, insularity from the ground war, and the capacity to produce game-changing resources for whichever side could bring them in. In 1915, the sinking of the SS Lusitania off the coast of Ireland nearly brought America in; however, the strong isolationist element of the United States had no interest in the war and despite President Woodrow Wilson’s altruistic call for a “League of Nations” to resolve international conflict, Congress would not budge and the American people’s distinct disinterest kept the U.S. out of the war for the time being. However, sentiments changed when Germany, in a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, attempted to align with Mexico against the United States. The proposed alliance was revealed with the interception of a diplomatic dispatch, known as the Zimmerman Telegram. In it, Germany advised Mexico that it intended to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic. Germany believed this would provoke America to enter the war and, in exchange for Mexico’s support, Germany would assist Mexico in restoring lands taken by the Americans during the Mexican American War. Within a few months, the Germans had sunk seven American merchant ships. Thus, in April, 1917, America declared war on Germany.

Within a month, Wilson had named Major General “Black Jack” Pershing to command the United States forces. While never formally allied with the western powers, America went to war and brought with it resources and manpower never imagined by the Germans or the war weary French and English. Once in theater, however, stale and unimaginative tactics fed United States Army and Marine Corps units into bloody and untenable battles. This tour is the story of those Doughboys and is a tribute to those warriors, of which all are now gone.

Friday, July 19, 2013
Meet at JFK airport for our flight to Paris. We do not expect to draw in numbers that will allow us a block airfare so we are tentatively planning Icelandic Air departing JFK, New York, around 2 PM and arriving in Paris at 6 AM on Saturday morning July, 20. The departure time and airline may adjust, but we expect to be en route by midafternoon.

Saturday, July 20, 2013

We will arrive, clear customs and meet up with our other travelers for a departure (time to be announced). We will then be en route to Arras via Catigny (correct?).

The American buildup was impressive—14,000 men in France by June, 1917, and over a million by May, 1918. Organized into five major divisions, Pershing resisted efforts of the French and English to use the troops as replacement brigades. Instead, he focused on organization, training and sustenance. Using allied-supplied weapons including tanks, planes and artillery, every spare berth on every ship that would float brought manpower. Once in France, roads were cut from ports, engineers added ship berths and, at full mobilization, 10,000 American soldiers were arriving in France daily.

Today we will look at the first action of an organic American unit, the 1st Division, under French command at the battle of Cantigny in May 1918. This allied victory cost the Americans 200 dead and was preceded by a severe gas attack by the Germans. The Americans seized the village and the high ground just over a mile from their stepping off point and held their positions against numerous German counter attacks.

From Catigny, we will continue on to Arras with stops en route at Thiepval to see the Memorial to the Missing at the Somme and Vimy Ridge to see the Memorial to the Canadian Missing. I have previously been to some of the WWI sites in France and they are pristinely kept and awesome memorials to what transpired there. The American Monument Commission and the Allied commissions have done these warriors well.

Sunday, July 21, 2013

Today we are going to focus on the Somme battlefields. There are several constants about WWI battlefields—they are massive and they are static. Thus a lot happens there and we cannot address one event without appropriate background. Still, the focus is, and will be, on the Americans. This was the start of the final campaign of the war and the weight of the American forces under the general command of Field Marshall Douglas Haig found themselves involved in numerous aspects of the offensive. We will follow the 80th Division from the start of the campaign on August 8 through the 18th; we will take in the 33rd Division at the Battle of Albert on July 4th; the activities of the US 6th Engineers of the 3rd Division at Lamotte-Warfusee in March 1918; the US 31st Infantry at Bray. Then we will visit the Peronne Museum and the Battle of St. Quentin before picking up the 27th and 30th Divisions in the Somme Offensive from September 24-30, 1918. This busy day will end with a visit to the American Monument at Bellicourt and the Somme American Cemetery. We are back to Arras for our overnight.
Monday, July 22, 2013

The first two days of this trip should have given you pause to reflect on the scope of the field of operations in this campaign. It is massive and complex. This day will be no different as we open with the great German counteroffensive known as the Second Battle of the Marne, which took place on July 15, 1918, on the Marne River near Paris. This was the final German offensive. When it stalled, Allied Commander in Chief, French General Ferdinand Foch, commenced a counterattack with the heavy support of American forces, some under French command, such as the Buffalo soldiers from the 92nd and 93rd Divisions. American support also included the 3rd Division “Rock of the Marne” and 8 other American Divisions, along with some newly introduced Renault FT tanks. By the time the counteroffensive petered out, the Germans were driven back. Now, the final Somme Campaign, which would end the war, was at hand.

From here, we will go to Compiègne where the armistice was signed and which, 22 years later, would be Hitler’s symbolically chosen site to humiliate France during its 1940 surrender to Nazi Germany. It is then back to war, where we will pick up the United States Marines and the 2nd Division at Belleau Wood—this June 4-10, 1918, epic battle is legendary in the Corps. After a visit to the Aisne-Marne Cemetery and the German line along Hill 204, we will take in another legendary battleground—Chateau Thierry. There, on May 31st, 1918, the US 3rd Division blunted the German offensive and forced the Germans to rotate the axis of their advance. Both of these battles display the Germans’ Spring offensive and the allied armies’ response. In this push, the Germans, using newly arrived divisions from the eastern front, were able to push within 60 miles of Paris. Hoping to empty the growing allied forces in the British sector prior to an effort to clear Flanders, the Germans did not count on the stubbornness of the Americans and allied forces. By June 8th the front was again static with the Allies suffering from massive mustard gas attacks. We will finish our day at the Oise-Aisne Cemetery near the 13th-century Fere-en-Tardenois Chateau. Another 6,000 Americans rest in that sacred soil. Then it is overnight in Reims.

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

BGES is proud of the quality and depth of study we offer our students. We still have three full days left! Today as we move toward two overnights at Verdun, we will find ourselves looking at operations of the American forces with the French army. The entire day will be a series of individual actions in the Champagne Region of France.

We will start with the 42nd Division on July 15-18, 1918; followed by the US 2nd Division operating with the 4th French Army on October 2nd through 10th, 1918. We will then stop at the American Memorial at Sommepy. This diverse day then picks up the fighting of 369th, 371st and 372nd Infantry Regiments of the 93rd Division from September 26 through October 7, 1918, as well as the 368th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division September 26 through October 1 at Binarville. The day will end with visits to the Voie Sacree Memorial and the Citadel and Museum. Then it is back to Verdun.
Wednesday July 24, 2013

We’re picking up the pace today, starting with the St. Mihiel Salient. Until now, American forces had been under the overall command of Allied officers and served a support role. In this campaign, General Pershing commanded a force of American troops augmented by 48,000 French troops. The outcome was a smashing American victory due, primarily, to Pershing’s carefully planned campaign and his integration of various maneuver systems. At stake, a residual position from an earlier German success which created a salient bulge in the allied lines. The position cut the communications between Nancy and Verdun from early 1914 until Pershing went after it in the fall of 1918.

This campaign was noteworthy for the manner in which the Americans neutralized the German trenches and moved within them. Aggressive and inspired small unit leadership under men such as Colonel George Patton consistently produced superior results. Our day will take us throughout the region to many key sites with the campaign. We will overnight again in Verdun.

Thursday, July 25, 2013

I am struck by the broad range of battlefields and campaigns that the American Expeditionary Force fought in during 1918. Does the Meuse-Argonne mean anything to you? Of course it does! Within 10 days of the completion of the St. Mihiel Salient offensive, Pershing and the American army took up position to support the French sector between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest. The objective would be to slice in behind the German main line, along with attacking forces in Flanders, forcing an expeditious evacuation of the German army along the entire front.

The position Pershing chose to assault had defensive works four lines deep and was impressively emplaced on commanding terrain, which also had some extraordinarily well defended individual positions. The time table was difficult. And because Americans were still involved in the St. Mihiel Salient, Pershing assigned a big task – rotating out 220,000 French troops and bringing online 600,000 American troops into the staging area for the assault – to Colonel George C. Marshall. Aligned under the I, III and V Corps, Pershing’s target area was a twenty-mile front of the 60 miles that he held. Properly executed, Pershing would link up with the French 4th Army and cut a critical railroad supporting the main German lines.

As the attack stepped off, the inexperienced American combat troops punched through the first two German lines within a week, but bogged down in front of the third. Pershing rotated them out and replaced them with his rested veterans from other fields. The remainder of October found the going hard, but the third German line was broken and a country boy by the name of Alvin York had killed 15 Germans and captured another 132 men – in a single day.
On November 1st, the army had been strengthened, support roads constructed, the second US Army had stood up and Pershing, who was now an Army Group Commander, ordered the V Corps to spearhead an assault on the final German line six miles distant. Reinforced, they succeeded. And both they and the Americans’ III Corps were driving further into the German reserve area when hostilities ended. Pershing had used 1.2 million men, suffered 117,000 casualties and had defeated 25% of the entire German force on the Western Front. The Doughboys had been heard! We will visit the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Sedan. We will close the program at our hotel in Charleville-Mezières.

**Friday, July 26, 2013**

Our final day, we will pack up and head for the Charles de Gaulle Airport for an early afternoon departure. We expect to return to JFK at or before 7 PM. We will adjust, if necessary, to try and catch a morning flight. Details will be announced in due course. Thanks so much for coming.

**Our Faculty:**

**Peter Smith:** Peter’s life has revolved around the Great War since he inherited his grandfather’s medals and diary as a small boy. He grew up in rural East Yorkshire before joining the Territorial Army at 17. At 21, he decided he needed a little more action and enlisted as a Royal Marines Commando, serving with them for eleven years. For the next 14 years, Peter worked in the print industry, finally as the sales director for a Dorset-based company. In 2004, he moved to the Somme battlefields of France, where he started a bed and breakfast in the historic village of Flers. He now works full time as a historian, battlefield guide and researcher. His expertise encompasses the British, Australian and American experience and battlefields of the western front. Peter is a member of The British Commission for Military History, The Guild of Battlefield Guides, European Tour Operators Association and The Western Front Association. He is a prolific collector of Great War ephemera and photographs, many of which have been used in related publications.

**Tour Director:**

**Peter Lockwood:** The son of a British naval officer, Peter spent much of his childhood in various parts of the world. This introduction has led to a lifelong interest in the history of countries, their peoples and different cultures. After school he joined the British Army and continued to travel, serving in many different parts of the world. Where possible, his spare time was spent studying battlefield sites and the various campaigns. On leaving the Army, he continued his development of European history by research into the various races that make up the peoples of Great Britain. The Gasgoyne side of his family descends from a knight in the service of William the Conqueror when he landed in England at Hastings in 1066. In the early 1990's, an opportunity arose to live in Virginia; this gave Peter the chance to resurrect an interest he had in the American Civil War since
childhood. One of his books, a guide to “Virginia's Civil War Battlefields” was published in 1995. While living in Virginia, he was a founding member of the Lower Shenandoah Valley American Civil War Round Table. He has served as President of the American Civil War Round Table UK (2000-2004). Peter is the founder and chairman of the Dorset & South Wiltshire Western Front Association Branch. Peter is a member & supporter of The Guild of Battlefield Guides

**Meeting Site and Hotel:** We will meet and the tour will be formed from the Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris on the morning of July 20. Participants are welcome to arrive early and depart later by selecting the Land Only package. They are responsible for meeting the tour at the time and place specified. Failure to arrive within one hour of the designated time makes the individual responsible for catching up with the tour. In this circumstance, no refund will be given for any time missed and the expense of joining the tour will be borne by the individual.

**Airport and Transportation Arrangements:** Round trip airfare to/and from New York is included in the regular registration fee. A land only option is available. When the American cohort is formed, we will work the airfare to the convenience of the traveler while simplifying the rendezvous. If 10 or more register, we will seek a group airfare quote.

**Recommended Reading:** You will be provided with a reading book and maps to support this tour, which will be sent to you prior to the event. You may decide if you wish to bring it or not. Any handouts provided by the vendor will, of course, be presented to you in France. We recommend a few books to help you with the overall concept. This topic is so broad as to make a more comprehensive reading list impractical.

John S.D. Eisenhower, *Yanks, The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I*

Stephen L. Harris, *Harlem’s Hell Fighters, The African-American 369th Infantry in World War I*


Donald Smythe, *Pershing, General of the Armies*

George B. Clark, *Devil Dogs, Fighting Marines of World War I*
2013 BGES Registration Form
The American Expeditionary Force in France:
The Doughboys in 1918

July 19-26, 2013

Name (s): _________________________________  ____________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________

Phone: ______________________________  Email: ___________________________

Your registration fee includes roundtrip airfare from New York JFK to and from Paris
Charles de Gaulle Airport, ground transportation and gratuities appropriate for the
registration numbers, a professional tour guide and a tour coordinator, maps, all
admissions, six nights lodging with breakfast, 2 lunches and one dinner. If you would
like, we will assist you in getting a through flight to either match up with us in New York
or ensure that you get to Paris at or near the same time as we do. This may result in a
cost savings for you.

This trip requires a valid passport. Failure to comply could result in the forfeiture of
some or all of your monies paid

_____ Registration $4300 single  _____ per person Double Occupancy $3950

_____ Land only single* $3000  _____ Land Only per person double* $2650

*Includes ground transportation and gratuities appropriate for the registration
numbers including pickup and delivery from/to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, a
professional tour guide and tour coordinator, maps, all admissions, six nights lodging
with breakfast, 2 lunches and one dinner. You are responsible for meeting the group
at the airport within one hour of the designated time. Should your flight be delayed,
alternative arrangements to join the tour will be arranged and those directions
provided to you before you depart the USA. We will track your flight to know your
status.

_____ Here is my deposit of $1000 for each person registered. An additional payment
of $1500 is due by March 15th and the net due is required by June 5th.

_____ I have enclosed the entire amount due.

Total Enclosed: $ _______________
Make checks payable to BGES and mail to PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531

Or fax to 434-432-0596

*Charge my MasterCard  VISA  American Express  Discover  $ _________

# ________________________________ Exp:  __________

Vin Code: ________ Signature: _____________________________________

• A 3% service fee will be added for the use of a credit card or PayPal. This is what
  the credit card or PayPal company charges me, on the average, for a transaction.
  This program is priced on a thin margin. Your check saves us both money. In
  this instance, it is fairer to you and everyone if you only pay for the service that
  you use.