

Alsace-Lorraine Battlefield Tour

SEPTEMBER 2010

INTRODUCTION

By mid August 1944 the Allies had won in Normandy. But the German armies had not been destroyed. They retreated back to Germany and reorganized. PART I of our tour tracks the achievements of divisions of Third Army and Seventh Army in the fall and winter 1944/45 as they fought a stubborn, refreshed, battle-experienced enemy in Alsace-Lorraine, on the borders of Germany, where the military advantage in supply and defense lay more with the Germans commanded by a ruthless and cunning dictator, Adolf Hitler.

Suddenly on December 16, 1944, Hitler launched the Battle of the Bulge through Luxembourg and Belgium. Eisenhower quickly ordered Patton's Third Army northwards to counter-attack. Patch's Seventh Army was left to cover for Third Army in Alsace-Lorraine. But Seventh Army did not have enough divisions and Hitler realized this. So in the 1945 New Year, Hitler launched a second massive offensive called Operation Nordwind (North Wind) through northern Alsace to smash the thin Seventh Army defenses. Fighting in the mountains of northern Alsace in deepest winter against a skilled and desperate foe was just about as bad as it got for the Americans. PART II of our tour tracks those American divisions who bravely and successfully endured the ferocious onslaught of Hitler's final *Gotterdammerung* offensive.

This tour is planned and guided by Patrick Hinchy, one of the most experienced veterans tour guides in Europe. You have a choice. You can participate in the entire tour PART I and PART II (PARIS - LORRAINE - ALSACE - FRANKFURT, SEPT 15 - 24) or just PART I (PARIS - LORRAINE - PARIS, SEPT 15 - 20). Patrick wants to include veterans' "special places" as much as he can. If you have any "special places" in Alsace-Lorraine, please tell Doris Davis or Sarah Krause. We may not be able to accommodate all requests, but we will do our best to make this a meaningful trip for you. US divisions and other units involved in Alsace-Lorraine are listed below to help you.

Contact Information

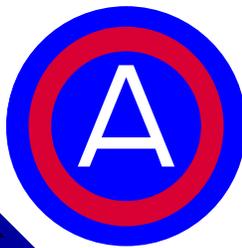
For tour information: Sarah Krause • MilSpec Tours
sarah@gomilspec.com • (215) 880-3176

If you need a Travel Agent to book a flight:

Travel Wizards (650) 696-6900
magda@travelwizards.com

If you have general questions:

Doris Davis • dordavis@earthlink.net • (650) 654-0101



ITINERARY

Part I

Day 1, Tuesday, September 14, 2010: USA/Aloft.

Day 2, Wednesday, September 15: Paris. Plan to arrive at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) this Wednesday morning. It is very



easy to get to our Paris CDG Airport hotel on your own from your Arrival Terminal. Instructions and the emergency phone number of Patrick Hinchy will be in your Final Documents sent to you prior to your departure. Free time this Wednesday afternoon for independent sightseeing in Paris.

Day 3, Thursday, September 16: Paris/Lunéville. Departing this morning from Paris, we travel eastwards through WWI and WWII battlefields. We have our special Wreath Ceremony with Taps at the Épinal American Military Cemetery, one of the main American cemeteries for Alsace-Lorraine battlefields. Then we continue on to our Lunéville hotel. (B)

Day 4, Friday, September 17: Lunéville. Lunéville became Seventh Army HQ and a key supply town. We participate with the local French population and military in official anniversary ceremonies commemorating and celebrating the American liberation of Lunéville in September 1944 by 79th Division and 2nd Cavalry Group. (B, L)

(Units locally involved: Inf Divs: 26th, 35th, 44th, 79th. Armored Divs: 4th, 6th, also 2nd Cavalry Group)

Day 5, Saturday, September 18: Lunéville. Parroy Forest just east of Lunéville was a key defensive position of Fifth Panzer Army threatening Third Army's flank. It had to be captured. We attend a moving ceremony of closure in Parroy Forest for the recently discovered remains of an American M-10 tank destroyer and its crew (*photo above*) knocked out supporting the 79th Division in the ferocious fighting. All this is the result of the devoted efforts of two local French WWII military researchers, Gerard Louis and Philippe Sugg,



American and French WWII Veterans honor fallen comrades on an earlier 79th Infantry Division MilSpec Tour. Photo by Robert F. Sincock

and is described in the famous military history website “The WW2 Letters of Private Melvin W. Johnson.” (www.privateletters.net) In October/November 1944, there was terrible fighting in the little villages facing the German *Vorvogesenstellung* defensive line in the Vosges foothills. We visit two such villages. First, Ancerville, where two veterans of the 315th Infantry Regiment of the 79th Infantry Division, ‘Doc’ Long (badly wounded) and Arthur Palmer (KIA) will be ceremonially honored. We are delighted that ‘Doc’ Long and Bill Palmer, nephew of Arthur Palmer, will be with us. We will enjoy a grand festive lunch with our local French friends from Ancerville and Lunéville. Then on to Frémonville just south of which Private Melvin W Johnson (314th, 79th Div) was fatally wounded. It was his wartime letters home that inspired the above mentioned website. He will be ceremonially honored in Frémonville. (B, L)

(Units locally involved: Inf Divs: 36th, 45th, 75th, 79th, 80th, 100th. Tank Destroyer Bn’s: 749th, 773rd, 812th)

Day 6, Sunday, September 19: Lunéville/Paris. This morning Patrick takes PART I tour members by coach from Luneville to Nancy Central Station and helps you board the superfast luxury TGV train to Paris - a great travel experience. It is easy to get a taxi or airport bus (not included) to your Paris CDG Airport hotel. (B) *End of Part I Tour*

Day 7, Monday, September 20: Paris/USA. Individual check-in at your Paris CDG Departure Terminal. It is easy to get to your Departure Terminal from your Paris CDG Airport Hotel. Patrick will provide you with easy-to-follow written instructions.



Part II

Day 6, Sunday, September 19: Luneville/Niederbronn. Morning free in Luneville. Military vehicles exhibition at the Chateau. Then Patrick takes us to the beautiful Vosges Mountains where we track the American breakthrough during November and December 1944. On the way high in the Vosges we visit the terrible Natzweiler-Struthof Concentration Camp, the main German concentration camp in France. Later, continue on to Niederbronn. (B, L, D) *(Units locally involved: Inf Divs: 3rd, 100th. Armored Div: 14th)*

Day 7, Monday, September 20: Niederbronn. We get acquainted with Operation Nordwind, Hitler’s tumultuous final offensive through northern Alsace. The main attack was launched on New Year’s Eve between Bitche and Sarreguemines, to break through the old Maginot Line defenses and seize Highway 4, Seventh Army’s main supply route. There was a supporting attack through the mountains south of Bitche to seize control of the roads through the Vosges. No doubt the memories of many US ‘Sons of Bitche’ vets will be stirred. Incredibly fierce fighting, but by January 7, 1945, Operation Nordwind had not been successful. However, Hitler tried again, a different way. Let’s call it Operation Nordwind Phase II. (B, L) *(Units locally involved: Inf Divs: 44th, 45th, 79th, 100th)*

Day 8, Tuesday, September 21: Niederbronn. Operation Nordwind Phase II. After January 7, 1945, Hitler shifted the main attack eastwards to the hills south of Wissembourg in order to seize Haguenau and Strasbourg, the keys to the Alsatian plain and the Rhine. Two villages stood in the way: Hatten and Rittershofen. The infantry and armored battle for them is legendary. It lasted until January 20, when Seventh Army was required to pull back to a defensive line on the River Moder. We visit these villages, highlighted by an official reception and lunch in Hatten to commemorate the battle. (B, L) *(Units locally involved: Inf Divs: 42nd, 79th. Armored Div: 14th)*



General George C. Marshall emerged from the 79th Div CP in Parroy Forest on October 9, 1944. US Army Archive Photo

Day 9, Wednesday, September 22: Niederbronn/Mannheim. We checkout of our Niederbronn hotel this morning before continuing our tour with a ceremony and reception in Haguenau, capital of Northern Alsace. Haguenau had a miserable fate during the war. After liberation by the 79th Division on December 11, 1944, it was then partially reoccupied by the Germans in Operation Nordwind Phase II. Seventh Army pulled back to the southern bank of the River Moder that runs through Haguenau. The town remained on the frontline until March 16th.

We continue to Strasbourg. Besides learning about its dramatic wartime history, we have an extended lunchtime break in this beautiful cathedral city and European Union parliamentary capital. North of Strasbourg, we see where 79th Div resisted the Rhine bridgehead ruthlessly forged by Himmler’s newly formed Army Group. (B, D)

(Units locally involved: Inf Divs: 3rd, 79th. Armored Div: 14th)

Day 10, Thursday, September 23: Mannheim/Frankfurt. This morning we visit the historic university city of Heidelberg that also served as an important US and NATO headquarters from the Cold War onwards. This afternoon and evening our tour concludes with a Grand Farewell Cruise along the most beautiful and world-famous section of the River Rhine with dinner and wine on board. Overnight in a Frankfurt Airport hotel. (B, D)

Day 11, Friday, September 24: Frankfurt/USA. After breakfast, individual transfers by hotel shuttle to the Frankfurt International Airport for your flight home to the USA. (B) *End of Part II*

Alsace-Lorraine 2010 Battlefield Tour



September 2010 Reservation Application



From \$1,584 per person (Price based on double occupancy / single room additional charge)

Please make ___ reservation(s) on the Alsace-Lorraine 2010 Battlefield Tour. Enclosed is \$ ___ representing \$400.00 per person deposit. (Please make checks payable to "MilSpec Tours")

Tour Option (√ one)

- Part I Only / Sept. 15-20: \$1,584 per person double-occupancy (\$559 single room supplement)
- Entire Tour (Part I and II) / Sept 15-24: \$2,947 per person (\$885 single room supplement)

Payment Option (√ one)

- Option A: I would like to Pay In Full. Payment enclosed.
- Option B: I am paying a deposit only and will pay in full 60 days before departure.

Insurance Option (√ all that apply)

- I accept the travel insurance at \$129 per person Part I only.
- I accept the travel insurance at \$164 per person Part I with single room.
- I accept the travel insurance at \$200 per person for the entire tour.
- I accept the travel insurance at \$270 per person for the entire tour with single room.
- I would like insurance to cover my airline flights (*call MilSpec to obtain cost*)
- I will obtain my own insurance.

Please add the cost of your insurance to your \$400 deposit when submitting this registration form. If your insurance payment accompanies this reservation, preexisting medical conditions will be waived for coverage.

My name as it appears on my passport followed by the names of those registering with me on this reservation form:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____

Please furnish us with both your street address and post office box address to avoid delays in shipment of documents to you by Federal Express.

Your home phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____

Email: _____@_____

Any diet/health problems? _____

Special requests/places to visit: _____

- I desire: 2-in-a-room. Single Room Supplement at \$559 (Part I) or \$885 (Entire Tour)
 Willing to share, 2-in-a-room basis. Roommate (if known) _____

To charge your deposit to a major credit card, please complete the following:

- Discover Card Visa Mastercard American Express

Tour #10-370

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Name on Card: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: ___/___/___ Billing Zip Code: _____

I agree to the terms and conditions as outlined in this tour brochure.

Signature: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Mail to:

MilSpec Tours

Post Office Box 340
 Flourtown, PA 19031-0340
 Phone 215-248-2572 Fax 215-248-5250
 Email: GoMilSpec@aol.com Web:GoMilSpec.com

Your Alsace-Lorraine Tour Includes. .

*First-class and selected hotels with private bath (where available), 2-in-a-room basis. Single room additional cost. *Breakfast daily plus table d'hôte lunches and dinners in accordance with the custom of each country and as noted in the itinerary. *Mini-van or motorcoach transportation as required by the itinerary. *Sightseeing as specified with English-speaking guide & appropriate admission fees. *Porterage of one (1) suitcase per person, in selected hotels. *Tips & taxes on all prepaid services. *Professional Escort while on tour.

Tour Prices Do Not Include: TransAtlantic air; airport /customs/departure taxes, passports, any applicable visa fees, excess baggage charges, optional sightseeing, meals other than those shown in the itineraries, items not on table d'hôte menus, laundry, liquor, mineral water, beverages with lunch & dinner, porterage of luggage in all hotels, customary, gratuities to Tour Directors, Coach Drivers & local guides, & any other expenses of a personal nature.

Tour Prices are based on a minimum of 30 tour participants as shown in the itinerary on Part I and 20 tour participants on the entire tour, and on tariffs and rates (currency & exchange) known at the time of printing; prices are subject to adjustment without notice in event of changes to such rates prior to departure.

Hotels: Unless otherwise stated, all tour prices are based on two persons sharing a twin/double room. Applicable single supplements are indicated for those wishing single room accommodations. Single rooms are limited in quantity and are sometimes not of the same size or quality as twin/double rooms. Single room reservations will be accepted with the understanding that we cannot guarantee single rooms will be available on all parts of your tour. We do not recommend triple rooms as they tend to be very crowded; in most cases, triple rooms are a twin room to which a cot has been added. There is no reduction in tour cost for triple rooms.

Deposits and Final Payments: A deposit of \$400 per person is required to effect reservations. This deposit forms part of your final payment which is due when billed but not later than 60 days prior to departure. Acceptance on tour is subject to verification of payment in full to MilSpec Tours.

Baggage: No responsibility is incurred by MilSpec for loss or damage to baggage or any of the passengers belongings. It is recommended that all passengers purchase baggage insurance.

Passports and Visas: A valid passport is required for all tour participants. Visas are not required for this tour program.

Smoking: Please kindly note that for the safety and well-being of the group, smoking is not permitted on the motorcoach at any time.

Cancellations for unforeseen and valid reasons in advance of departure are entitled to a full refund less actual expenses incurred and a \$75.00 per person service charge, if written notice is received not later than 120 days prior to departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 60 days prior to departure, deposits will be refunded less \$150 per person service charge; less than 60 days prior to departure date, deposits will be refunded, less a \$250 per person service charge and any cancellation charges assessed against MilSpec Tours by hotels, transportation companies, airlines and other purveyors of services. Trip cancellation and interruption insurance is available and strongly recommended on all tours.

Revisions and Refunds: All changes must be confirmed in writing. A handling fee of \$75.00 per transaction will be charged for any alteration or revision made to a tour reservation. All claims for refunds must be made within 60 days after termination of the tour and must be accompanied by a statement from the Tour Director, certifying exactly the services not taken. No refund can be made for unused transportation where group tickets or vehicles are involved. No re-

fund can be made for services not taken unless the services omitted cover 72 consecutive hours or more.

Tour Participants: In order to insure the smooth operation of all tours, and to ensure congenial tour groups, MilSpec Tours reserves the right to accept or reject any person as a tour participant and to expel from the tour any person for any reason including anyone whose conduct is deemed incompatible with the interest of the tour group. Any handicapped participant who requires special assistance must be accompanied by a qualified helper who assumes total responsibility for the handicapped participant's well-being. MilSpec Tours reserves the right to exclude from the tour any handicapped participant whose physical condition impairs customary operation of the tour. Should a wheelchair or other special equipment, care, maintenance or services be required at any time, all arrangements shall be made and all costs and obligations will be borne by the tour member. All tour members must be able to make their own way on/off the motorcoach. Well-behaved children over 10 years of age are welcome on any MilSpec Tours tour under the same conditions as noted above.

Responsibility: MilSpec Tours and/or its agents act only in the capacity of agent for carriers, hotels, bus operators, and other suppliers of services and shall not be held responsible for any injury or for any loss or damage caused by accidents or events beyond their control, or by any action or negligence of attendants or third parties who are not in their employ and on their payroll. The tour operator and/or its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air, sea or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels specified for others of similar category. The right is reserved to make minor adjustments in the itinerary. Prices are based upon current tariffs and are subject to adjustment in the event of change. The right is reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made prior to departure. The issuance and acceptance of vouchers or tickets shall be deemed to be consent to the above conditions. In addition, transportation companies concerned shall not be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time that passengers are not on board their carriers. The passenger contract in use by the carriers concerned, when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the transportation companies and the purchaser of the tour and/or passengers. The itineraries shown are planned at the time of issue of this flyer, but are subject to revision should circumstances make it necessary. Such revisions will be shown on the individual traveling itinerary you receive before departure.

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Travel Insurance

Take advantage of our valuable insurance protection. Cost starts at \$129 for the following coverages:

Schedule of Coverages

• Trip Cancellation & Interruption	Up to Tour Cost
• Travel Delay (\$100 maximum per day)	\$500
• Baggage and Travel Documents	\$1,000
• Baggage Delay	\$100
• Medical Expense	\$10,000
• Emergency Medical Transportation	\$20,000
• Accidental Death & Dismemberment	\$25,000

This is a brief summary of the insurance plan offered. For a full description of the benefits, exclusions & conditions, an insurance brochure is available. Or, call Travel Guard International at 1-888-826-1300.