



America and WWI: A Traveler's Guide

Mark D. Van Ells

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Rich descriptions of scenes from WWI and present-day areas of interest for historians and travelers make this somber guide intriguing.

A sophisticated history text integrates the practical details of a guide in this informative and illustrative look at World War I. Mark D. Van Ells presents his meticulously researched view of the Great War in *America and WWI: A Traveler's Guide*. Part instruction and part tourism—a complementary combination—this vivid and often graphic book ensnares the queasy traveler then provides a productive trip through its pages.

Written by a professor, these eighteen chapters and four appendixes contain vital statistics and an orderly progression of events that establish an accurate time line of the war. Interspersed are anecdotes, trivia, and black-and-white photographs. Helpful in gaining an understanding of the battles and sieges that transpired, Van Ells offers factual data like a journalist but explains martial reasoning like a teacher.

Patriotism charges this work with an anticipated pro-American stance. In an attempt to be uplifting, which is commendable, Van Ells shines a spotlight on those who died in the line of duty. “Ultimate sacrifice” may be a trite phrase, but this tribute to the lives snuffed out in their prime brings new attention to a long-past war.

Disturbing descriptions of the horrors inflicted on these dedicated soldiers give the book a somber tone, especially since many were never recovered in sequestered areas of France. Tourists inclined to explore must exercise caution.

Mark D. Van Ells is a professor of history at Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York. He earned a PhD in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Straightforward in his approach yet with writing that frequently elicits an emotional response, Van Ells delivers a powerful evaluation of the American doughboys and the war that few want to talk about any more. Often perceived as a prelude to World War II, the Great War left behind countless broken hearts and living souls with bodies wounded beyond repair.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (Spring 2015)

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