

PRESS RELEASE
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Virginia Delegation Commemorates Armistice During WWI Battle Site Visit in France Presents New U.S. Flag to the French Stewards of Memorial to the Last American Casualty of War

Chaumont-devant-Damvillers, France – To mark the centennial of the end of WWI, an official delegation of twenty-two people from Virginia traveled to France and traced the bloody steps of so many Virginians who marched through Europe during the war to end all wars. The trip was planned as a part of the Virginia Museum of History & Culture’s year-long commemoration of WWI, which was co-chaired by Senator Mark Warner and Senator Tim Kaine and sponsored by Lead Presenter The Boeing Company.

The delegation, representing all regions of the Commonwealth traveled across the primary battlefields of WWI over the course of 8 days, recounting the contributions of the 100,000 Virginians who served and the approximately 3,700 who made the ultimate sacrifice.

“It’s a journey that has come full circle,” said VMHC president and CEO Jamie O. Bosket. “The Great War defined our nation, and the culmination of the WWI centennial led us back to where it all began. We hope our visit will remind our friends in France that we share a history of bravery and honor, and that we will always seek to keep that memory alive through our work at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture and beyond.”

The delegation visited numerous United States’ monuments and cemeteries. The graves of Virginia soldiers at the American Cemeteries outside Paris and the decisive Muse Argonne battle were visited, as well as the famous sites relating to Sergeant York and the Lost Battalion.

The delegation viewed the memorial site to Henry Gunther—the last American to be killed in combat sixty seconds before the armistice went into effect on November 11, 1918, at 11:00 a.m. The small French town of Chaumont-devant-Damvillers erected a monument to Gunther and have cared for it for many years. During a brief ceremony, Susan S. Goode of Norfolk and Nancy H. Gottwald of Richmond presented an American flag to the local Mayor Mestnec. The flag once flew over the Virginia State Capitol and was given to replace the weather-beaten American flag that flew above Gunther’s monument. The ceremony, which took place on the front steps of the town hall, was a reminder of the many lasting and meaningful connections between the French and American people.

The delegation was closely followed by French President Emmanuel Macron’s Armistice centenary tour around Northern France.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society – a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is located at 428 North Boulevard in Richmond’s Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the research library. For more information call (804) 358-4901, visit VirginiaHistory.org, or connect with the Virginia Museum of History & Culture on Facebook and Twitter.

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