

Centenary of the First World War Armistice



The final offensive of the First World War



11 November 1918
Vrigne-Meuse
(Ardennes)



November 1918 : Crossing of River Meuse

Armistice negotiations between Marshal Foch and the Germans get under way in Rethondes, starting on 7 November.

In the evening of 8 November, French troops from the 163rd Infantry Division reach the River Meuse, which is said to be impassable without the help of military engineering. Nevertheless orders are given: the Meuse must be crossed, whatever the cost.

In the night of 9/10 November, the 415th Infantry Regiment receives the order to cross the Meuse. At sunrise, the sections that have already crossed the river are held up by fog and come under fire from German machine guns.

At 6 o'clock in the evening, the front stabilizes. 133 French soldiers are wounded and 57 lose their lives - 37 of them from the 415th Infantry Regiment.

In Vrigne-Meuse, on 11 November 1918, fighting ceases at 11 o'clock in the morning after the ceasefire is sounded by Octave Delaluque, despite the fact that barely minutes before French troops are doing their level best to reclaim a few yards of land, as much for symbolic as for strategic purposes, in the face of German soldiers who refuse to surrender and strenuously defend the territory they have occupied for the last four years.



Augustin Trébuchon : Last French infantryman to die in action

In the morning of 11 November 1918, in Vrigne-Meuse, a lance-corporal (a liaison officer from the 9th Company of the 415th Regiment of the 163rd Division) is bringing a message to his captain when he falls in action at 10.50 am, just ten minutes before the ceasefire is sounded by bugler Octave Delaluque.

11 November 2018

Tribute to the soldiers of the First World War, in Vrigne-Meuse

To mark the centenary of the Armistice of the First World War, Vrigne-Meuse, a small village in the Ardennes, located between Charleville-Mézières and Sedan, will pay a special tribute to the heroes of these battles.

Ceremonial parade

This event will bring together all the authorities.

The aim is to bring together the highest authorities of both the French and German States and to lend a national and European resonance to the occasion.

The occasion will be marked by the presence of troops, the presentation of military honours, historical evocations, Armistice-day bugle calls, laying of wreaths and tributes to the dead, parade, etc. Flag bearers from the Ardennes and several other French départements will take part.

On this occasion, a bridge of boats will be established on the Meuse, symbolizing the crossing of the river by the army in 1918 and leading onto a path of remembrance. Other events, including a series of lectures, will be organized in the week leading up to 11 November 2018.

The commemoration is a partnership between the French and the German authorities.





Watch “Augustin Trébuchon, the last World War One soldier
who lost his life in Vrine-Meuse”,
the short film shot by Ardenne Métropole,
on www.ardenne-metropole.fr's homepage.

Photographs :

Monument of the 163rd division on top of Signal de l'Epine, Côte 249, Vrine-Meuse

Portrait of Augustin Trébuchon, the last French soldier killed in action

War Memorial and graves of soldiers of the 415th Infantry Regiment ; Vrine-Meuse
cemetery

