



## **AUSTRALIAN BATTLEFIELD TOURS INDIVIDUAL TOURS OF THE WESTERN FRONT**

The following itineraries are suggested tours for individual Australians wishing to travel to and see the key sites of the battlefields of the Western Front. It specifically concentrates on key Australian actions in the areas, but these will be set within the wider context of the overall military objectives and strategy. These itineraries are perfectly suited to those who are unable to join a larger (and often longer) group departure, have limited time available for their visit, or are only interested in a short visit with the Australian Areas of Operation as a specific destination in mind.

**Tour 1: 1 Night / 2 Days Visits:**  
Fromelles, Poziers, Villers Bretonneux

**Tour 2: 2 Nights / 3 Days Visits:**  
Amiens, Pozieres, Mouquet Farm, Hill 60, Ypres, Fromelles, Bullecourt, Le Hamel, Villers Bretonneux

**Tour 3: 3 Nights / 4 Days Visits:**  
Amiens, Pozieres, Mouquet Farm, Hill 60, Ypres, Fromelles, Bullecourt, Le Hamel, Villers Bretonneux, Peronne, St Quentin, Montbrehain

### **Notes:**

~ The tour can be taken any date to suit an independent traveller's schedule. It is a personal individual journey with your qualified battlefield guide.

~ As an individual tour the programme can be modified to suit the traveller's personal requirements in as much to visit a specific War Cemetery of a relative, be it in Flanders or the Somme, or some historic must-see site.

~ Fully escorted by a battlefield guide who is a member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides . English speaking. [www.gbg-international.com](http://www.gbg-international.com)

~ Costing available on request, and subject to final agreed itinerary.

~ Travel across the battlefields by private vehicle.

~ Accommodation on tour can be altered to suit customer's choice of style & hotel grade.

These arrangements are offered by "**Battlefields of the World**". If you wish to discuss any details of this programme please call Dennis Weatherall on Sydney Telephone: (02) 9520 6023 or email: [dweatherall\\_eng@bigpond.com](mailto:dweatherall_eng@bigpond.com) . Dennis is a qualified member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides Inc. To view his qualifications log on to the web site [www.gbg-international.com](http://www.gbg-international.com) .click on Badged Guides and scroll to Guide # 34.

## **TOUR 1 - 1 NIGHT / 2 DAYS**

The following is a suggested itinerary to be offered to small groups of Australians wishing to travel to and see the key sights of the battlefields of the Western Front in France. It specifically concentrates on key Australian actions in the areas, but these will be set within the wider context of the overall military objectives and strategy.

**Day One:** Meeting your Guide at Lille Railway Station, which is easy to get to from either Paris or London, we will travel the short distance to Fromelles, in French Flanders. Much in the news of late, because of the exhumation from a series of mass graves of primarily Australian soldiers, we will visit the beautiful Cobbers Memorial, located on the German Front line. Your guide will explain how it was that the 5th Australian Division suffered such terrible losses here in July 1916. We can visit the unique VC Corner Cemetery and then drive the short distance into the village, where your guide will point the mass grave site. Across the road, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have created a beautiful new cemetery, where the men buried by the Germans in 1916 have been laid to rest. An hours journey down the motorway takes us to Bullecourt, the small French village that cost so many Australian lives in April and May 1917. This is an easy battlefield to walk around and is well worth the hour or so that it takes; our friend Albert Jacka won a bar to his MC here . we will see where it happened. This afternoon, we will spend time on the Somme battlefields of 1916. Three Australian Divisions were involved in the capture and consolidation of the small village of Pozieres. Located in the middle of the battlefield, the Aussies suffered over 23,000 casualties in just six weeks in their valiant effort to secure the village, ready for the next part of the advance. We will visit the remains of the vast twin storey concrete pill box, nicknamed Gibraltar, and orientate ourselves, from the viewing gallery near to the 1st Division Memorial. Next, we will walk from the edge of the village to the famous Windmill, a German observation point, across the fields, seeing the view that the defenders had and noticing how difficult it would have been for the Australians to advance. Near to here is believed to be where Captain Albert Jacka won his first Military Cross . you will hear the story. It is also possible that, depending on the time of year, you may find battlefield debris still lying in these fields. Overnight accommodation is likely to be in either Arras or Amiens.

**Day Two:** Depending on the location of our accommodation, we will either visit the 1918 battlefields and the wonderful Australian National War Memorial at Villers-Brettonneux and museum at the Victoria School in the morning and conclude our tour with a walk around the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont Hamel, where the trench lines are still in evidence or reverse the itinerary, so that the walk is done in the morning, and the tour concludes at Villers-Brettonneux. Either which way, you can not fail to be impressed by the sacrifices of men from all nations who fought in such desperate conditions and the beauty of the area now, which still bears the testimony of the enormity of the struggle that ensued nearly 100 years ago. You will be returned to Lille, for your onward travel.

## **TOUR 2 - 2 NIGHTS / 3 DAYS**

The following is a suggested itinerary to be offered to small groups of Australians wishing to travel to and see the key sights of the battlefields of the Western Front. It specifically concentrates on key Australian actions in the areas, but these will be set within the wider context of the overall military objectives and strategy.

**Day One:** Meet your guide at Amiens or Lille railway stations. (TBC) The first day will concentrate on the Battle of the Somme. Three Australian Divisions were involved in the capture and consolidation of the small village of Pozieres. Located in the middle of the battlefield, the Aussies suffered over 23,000 casualties in just six weeks in their valiant effort to secure the village, ready for the next part of the advance. We will visit the remains of the vast twin storey concrete pill box, nicknamed Gibraltar, and orientate ourselves, from the viewing gallery near to the 1st Division Memorial. Next, we will walk from the edge of the village to the famous Windmill, a German observation point, across the fields, seeing the view that the defenders had and noticing how difficult it would have been for the Australians

to advance. Near to here is believed to be where Captain Albert Jacka won his first Military Cross. You will hear the story. It is also possible that, depending on the time of year, you may find battlefield debris still lying in these fields. We will drive the short distance to Mouquet Farm, another key Australian site, before visiting the Theipval Memorial to the Missing. After lunch, at the nearby Ulster Tower, we will drive down towards the British front lines of 1st July 1916 and see the remains of one of the largest mines blown on the Western Front. Your guide will explain how the galleries were dug and the reasons for such a large explosion. Returning north, we will visit the preserved trenches at the Newfoundland Memorial Park, close to Beaumont Hamel. Here, the original trench lines are still clearly visible on the ground, and the Park contains memorials and cemeteries to commemorate those who fought and died here. Almost irrespective of the weather, a walk around the Park is a thought provoking and sobering experience. To conclude the day, we will visit the location of the Sheffield Memorial Park. Here are remembered the some of the men who died on the worst day in the history of the British Army. 20,000 men were killed on 1st July 1916, and another 37,000 were injured. Those attacking at this point suffered among the highest number of casualties. Your guide will explain why there was such loss, and what had been planned to prevent this. We will then drive to our hotel, conveniently situated to Ypres, which will be our destination for tomorrow.

**Day Two:** Day Two will focus on probably the most infamous section of the Western Front. The Ypres Salient. Australian and New Zealand troops fought during the 3rd Battle of Ypres, the so called Passchendaele Offensive. The day will start with a visit to the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery in the world at Tyne Cot, on the slopes of the Passchendaele Ridge. There are two Australian Victoria Cross winners buried amongst nearly 12,000 soldiers in this cemetery. We can walk towards Passchendaele along a recently created pathway and see what a short distance it is, although the soldiers of 1917 could not have done it as quickly as we will. We will visit Polygon Wood, and walk some of the area, where trench lines can still be seen amongst the regrown trees. Our lunch stop is very special. Johann Vandewalle runs a café near to the wood and has a special understanding of the actions of Australian troops. Anybody from down under is always made very welcome here. After lunch, we will visit the Australian Tunnellers Memorial at Hill 60 and walk a short distance to see the impressive Caterpillar Crater. Your guide will explain how the crater was formed and how the miners and tunnellers of all nations dug the range of galleries required for the successful mine offensive in June 1917. We will then follow the approximate line of the Messines offensive, before ending at Ploegsteert Wood. This area was held by the Australians in 1917 and, despite being a relatively quiet sector, many of them still lie in the beautiful cemeteries within the wood. We will return to Ypres for an early supper, before we attend the daily playing of the Last Post under the Menin Gate.

**Day Three:** A little more travel is required today. Our first stop will be at Fromelles, in French Flanders. Much in the news of late, because of the exhumation from a series of mass graves of primarily Australian soldiers, we will visit the beautiful Cobbers Memorial, located on the German Front line. Your guide will explain how it was that the 5th Australian Division suffered such terrible losses here in July 1916. We can visit the unique VC Corner Cemetery and then drive the short distance into the village, where your guide will point the mass grave site. Across the road, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have created a beautiful new cemetery, where the men buried by the Germans in 1916 have been laid to rest. An hours journey down the motorway takes us to Bullecourt, the small French village that cost so many Australian lives in April and May 1917. This is an easy battlefield to walk around and is well worth the hour or so that it takes; our friend Albert Jacka won a bar to his MC here. We will see where it happened. On the way to our final stop, we will pass by Le Hamel, the scene of Monash's successful attack in July 1918, before visiting the impressive Australian Memorial to the Missing at Villers-Brettonneux. Here are inscribed the names of over 10,000 Australian soldiers who died in France and have no known grave. The Memorial is located at the rear of Villers-Brettonneux Cemetery, and the range of nationalities in the cemetery signify what a desperate struggle things had become during the final part of the German Spring Offensive in 1918. After spending an appropriate amount of time at the Memorial, we will visit the village, including the Victoria School, before returning to our pick up point for onward travel.

## **TOUR 3 - 3 NIGHTS / 4 DAYS**

The following is a suggested itinerary to be offered to small groups of Australians wishing to travel to and see the key sights of the battlefields of the Western Front. It specifically concentrates on key Australian actions in the areas, but these will be set within the wider context of the overall military objectives and strategy.

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**Day Two:** Day Two will focus on probably the most infamous section of the Western Front. The Ypres Salient. Australian and New Zealand troops fought during the 3rd Battle of Ypres, the so called Passchendaele Offensive. The day will start with a visit to the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery in the world at Tyne Cot, on the slopes of the Passchendaele Ridge. There are two Australian Victoria Cross winners buried amongst nearly 12,000 soldiers in this cemetery. We can walk towards Passchendaele along a recently created pathway and see what a short distance it is, although the soldiers of 1917 could not have done it as quickly as we will. We will visit Polygon Wood, and walk some of the area, where trench lines can still be seen amongst the regrown trees. Our lunch stop is very special. Johann Vandewalle runs a café near to the wood and has a special understanding of the actions of Australian troops. Anybody from down under is always made very welcome here. After lunch, we will visit the Australian Tunnellers Memorial at Hill 60 and walk a short distance to see the impressive Caterpillar Crater. Your guide will explain how the crater was formed and how the miners and tunnellers of all nations dug the range of galleries required for the successful mine offensive in June 1917. We will then follow the approximate line of the Messines offensive, before ending at Ploegsteert Wood. This area was held by the Australians in 1917 and, despite being a relatively quiet sector, many of them still lie in the beautiful cemeteries within the wood. We will return to Ypres for an early supper, before attending the daily playing of the Last Post under the Menin Gate.

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**Day Four:** Our last day will focus on some of the successes that the Allies experienced during the final stages of the war. We will focus on the Last Hundred Days, from the breakout on the Amiens front in August 1918 and follow the Australians eastwards towards Peronne, St Quentin and their final battle at Montbrehain. If we are doing well on time, a visit to the Historial de la Grande Guerre Museum in Peronne is worth the time. Visitors will notice a landscape that has changed little from the last days of the war, and the rolling countryside gives good views of the battle areas. Memorials, cemetery visits and stories will be the key ingredients of the day. We will also see the entrance to the St Quentin Canal tunnel at Bellicourt, where the 3rd and 5th Divisions attacked in September 1918, along with their American allies as they broke through the Hindenburg Line, and, to illustrate the global nature of the war, pay our respects at the immaculate American Cemetery at Bony. We will then return across the front to our selected departure point.