

Battlefield Exploration



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Australians in Flanders Fields

The British Imperial Force consisted of many nationalities from all over the world. Yet, the Irish story is a very special one. With a massive rebellion against the English rule the island of Ireland was internally divided: fight with the English or against the English. The MP brothers John and Willie Redmond chose to fight with the English in the hope of getting home rule for Ireland...

The Tour

Your professional battlefield guide will come pick you up at your accommodation* at about 9 am.

From Ypres we drive to **Kemmel** and the hilly area where lots of shelters and dugouts were created. A brief introduction at Lettenberg shows you the importance of the landscape south of Ypres. In the local tourist information centre we'll watch an interesting introduction film on the Mine Battle of Messines Ridge.

From Kemmel onwards to **Ploegsteert**. At the *Christmas Truce Memorial* you'll get to understand the task of the 3rd Australian Division during the Mine Battle of Messines Ridge. It was the New Zealand Division who had to actually capture the town of Messines. Their memorial park at Messines clearly shows the difficulty of capturing higher ground.

At **Messines** we'll visit the local museum and have a look at one of the *Ross Bastiaan memorial* plaques. The Melbourne dentist provided bronze information panels in Gallipoli, but also on the Western Front.

From Messines we drive to back to Ypres for lunch.

After lunch we'll visit **Hill 60**. The site is particularly interesting, as it has been left almost untouched since the end of the war and thus clearly shows the scars of warfare in the terrain. The **Caterpillar Crater** just next to Hill 60 is the best preserved crater of the Mine Battle of Messines Ridge, and together with the Hill 60 crater the result of actions of the Australian tunnelers. It was Captain Oliver Woodward who blew the mines on 7th June 1917. The memorial to the 1st Australian Tunneling Company is certainly worth the visit.

Next onwards to the **Menin Road**, where we continue our tour with the Battle of the Menin Road and the Battle of Polygon Wood. At **Buttes New Cemetery** we have a look at the Memorial to the Australian 5th Division and pay our respects to the *Zonnebeke Five*. There are also some other very interesting graves at the cemetery, as well as another Memorial to the Missing for the New Zealand soldiers.

The tour ends with the Battle of Broodseinde. On the 4th October 1917 the ANZACs were able to get hold of 's Graventafel ridge and Tyne Cot on the German "Flanders I Stellung" line. A visit to the **Tyne Cot Cemetery** visitor centre and the cemetery itself brings alive the horror in which the ANZACs had to gain their territory... Nearly 12,000 British soldiers have been buried at Tyne Cot Cemetery, while the Tyne Cot Memorial list another 35,000 names of missing.

Back to Ypres. End of the tour at about 5 pm.

** When accommodated in the Ypres area, there will be no extra charge for the pick-up and drop-off at your accommodation. If you want to be picked up from other places (like Bruges, Ghent, Lille, Arras, ... et cetera), there will be an extra charge for the extra mileage.*

Practical Information

- » **Departure** from your accommodation in Ypres at about 9 am; back in Ypres by 5 pm.
Other departure points (Bruges, Ghent, Lille, ...) are possible, but may result in an extra charge.
- » **Tariff:** € 245 (with a maximum of 7 participants).
 - > If more than 7 participants, tariff will be depending on the coach tariff.
 - > In the price is included: transportation with minibus and professional guide/driver.
 - > No entrance fees to be paid during this tour.
- » **Walking:** only short distances from the car to the actual sites. Never more than 750 yards.

**Want to add a specific site to the itinerary? Or want to combine several itineraries?
Please let us know, and we'll provide a quote!**