Australian Remembrance Trail
A BRIEF HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA IN WORLD WAR I IN FLANDERS

Gallipoli, 25 April 1915. Australian and New Zealand troops land on the Turkish peninsula. After eight months of stalemate the military operation at Gallipoli fails, but the legend of the ANZACs as soldiers of great courage, loyalty, sacrifice and comradeship is born.

After Gallipoli the Australians move to the Western Front. They take part in the Battle of the Somme and also see heavy losses in ‘minor’ actions such as the one at Fromelles. During the course of 1917 all Australian forces arrive in Belgium for the ‘Flanders offensive’. Their first major battle takes place on 20 September 1917 near the Menin Road during which the 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions reach the outskirts of Polygon Wood.

Six days later, on 26 September 1917, the Battle of Polygon Wood begins. The 4th and 5th Australian Division are on the attack. The 5th expels the Germans from the infamous Butte. The 4th is advancing on the left hand side of the allocated sector.

On 4 October 1917, the 3rd Australian Division captures CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery, a strategic position in the German Flandern I line defended by concrete bunkers and machine guns. This episode is also known as the Battle of Broodseinde and is regarded as one of the most successful Australian actions of World War I.

Two and a half years after Gallipoli, on 12 October 1917, the Australian efforts reach a bloody climax during the fight for Passchendaele village. Weather conditions worsen and the rain turns the battlefield into a quagmire of deep and unremitting mud. The attack is a failure, but for Australians it is a turning point.

MEMORIAL MUSEUM PASSCHENDAELE 1917

The MMP 1917 presents the historic story of the First World War, with a particular emphasis on the Battle of Passchendaele. With more than half a million casualties for a frontline movement of only eight kilometres, ‘Passchendaele’ became a symbol of the great futility of the violence of war in all its horror. The MMP 1917 combines the interactive design of a modern museum with the exceptional aspect of experiencing the Dugouts & Trenches. The museum section provides an overview of the five battles of Ypres, with historical objects, authentic letters, posters and other documents, uniforms of the various armies and video clips etc. The tour continues through the unique Dugout Experience and concludes at the faithful reconstruction of German and British trenches, along which original shelters have been replicated. An intense visit that will only enrich your knowledge of the battle sites in the area.

THE AUSTRALIAN EXHIBITION: AN ENTRY POINT FOR AUSTRALIAN VISITORS

Zonnebeke was the centre of Australian operations in Flanders during the First World War. Today the village and the surrounding area still include a number of historical sites of interest to Australia. The Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 plays an important role in the valorization of several of these sites. Because of the strong affiliation between the MMP1917 and Australia, the Australian exhibition in the museum doubles as an entry point to the historical battlefields. In this part there is a strong focus towards Australians and their heritage in Flanders. Beside historical facts, Australia-related objects and panels, the visitors are linked to other heritage sites and points of interest on the Western Front.

Location:
Berten Pilstraat 5/A, B-8980 Zonnebeke
ZONNEBEKE CHATEAU GROUNDS

The historic chateau grounds of Zonnebeke are the ideal departure point for an exploratory route along the battlefields of 1917. The well-known Polygon Wood and CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world, are located less than three kilometres away. You can completely relax in the chateau grounds, read a book on a bench in the park, stroll hand-in-hand by the lake or take a moment to stop and think about the history of WWI in the ‘Poppy gardens’, themed gardens dedicated to the various nations that fought in the Battle of Passchendaele.

PASSCHENDAELE ARCHIVES

No matter how impressive a visit to CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery, the German cemetery in Langemark, or other cemeteries and memorials is, one can only find names there, with the scantiest of details. With the ‘Passchendaele Archives’ the Memorial Museum Passchendaele intends to put a face and a story to those names.

The ‘Passchendaele Archives’ are a collection of personal files of soldiers who fell between 12 July and 15 November 1917 of whom a photograph is available. The files contain photographs, family and military information. Nonetheless, the MMP1917 also builds up an archive even when there is no picture available. Anyone who has information on a soldier who fell during the Battle of Passchendaele can contact the museum via archives@passchendaele.be.

The museum will try to find out exactly what happened and will create a report, based on war diaries and journals of his unit. Next to this, the museum will also provide a map with the approximate place of where the soldier was killed or mortally wounded.

PASSCHENDAELE MEMORIAL GARDENS AND PASSCHENDAELE MEMORIAL PARK

The project ‘Passchendaele Memorial Gardens’ is part of the masterplan ‘Legacy of Passchendaele’. A part of this project was to reunite two Zonnebeke Chateau Grounds, that were separated since 1960.

Seven gardens in the form of a poppy will be incorporated into the chateau grounds. The aim is to create a memorial garden for the countries that fought during the First World War. Each year from 2014 to 2018 the community of Zonnebeke will open one or more gardens. Each poppy consists of three little gardens.

RESEARCH CENTER

The research centre is housed in the former rectory at Zonnebeke, a modernistic building by Huib Hoste. It is a place where researchers, students and interested individuals can ask their questions about the region’s battlefields and heritage.

CWGC TYNE COT CEMETERY

CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery is an impressive yet understated haven of tranquility that extends through the former battle landscape. With its 11,956 graves, it is one of the largest Commonwealth cemeteries in the world and it is a silent witness to the bloody Battle of Passchendaele. During the British offensive of 1917, almost 500,000 victims fell in 100 days for a territorial gain of only eight kilometres. ‘Tyne Cot’ was originally a German defence position on the first line in Flanders. In October 1917, the Australian troops established an aid station there that soon grew in to a small cemetery with 340 graves for the soldiers who had succumbed to their injuries on the spot. After the war – between 1919 and 1921 – the British ‘Exhumation Companies’ collected 12,000 dead from the surrounding battlefields. Of these, only 3,800 bodies could be identified. The wall behind the cemetery contains the names of 35,000 soldiers with no known grave. They include British, Irish and New Zealanders who perished in the region after 16 August 1917. Many tens and even hundreds of thousands of visitors come each year to pay their respects to the men – some still only boys – who lost their lives in the surrounding battlefields. A visit that leaves no one unmoved.

The cemetery was designed by Sir Herbert Baker and inaugurated in 1927. Nowadays, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is responsible for maintaining the cemetery. The visitors’ centre, which the British Queen Elizabeth II and the former Belgian Queen Paola inaugurated in 2007, provides more information about the cemetery itself and offers a panoramic view over the battlefields of 1917. A 5 km walking route, with thematic information panels, takes you from the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 to CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery.

The visitors’ centre is open daily from 10:00h to 18:00h. Closed from 1 December to 31 January.

Contact:
Ieperstraat 1, B-8980 Zonnebeke
T 051 77 04 41, kenniscentrum@zonnebeke.be

Location:
Tyne Cotstraat,
B-8980 Passendale (Zonnebeke)
Parkspace via Vijfwegestraat,
B-8980 Passendale (Zonnebeke)
CYCLE, WALKING AND CARTRAILS

CYCLE TRAILS

Cycle route 'The Legacy'
The cycle route is 37 km long and enables you to encounter the monumental heritage of the Battle of Passchendaele. The route starts at the Zonnebeke Tourist Office from where you cross the rolling landscape and travel along various WWI and WWII sites. This route is also ideal to cycle on an electric bicycle. The route map is available at the Tourist Office for €2.00.

Cycle route ‘Pioneer’
The 'Pioneer' cycling route takes you through the Front landscape and tells the story of German activity in the region in the time between the Second and Third Battle of Ypres. You will cycle past all kinds of relics of the war such as German bunkers, cemeteries and memorials. You will be following the trail of the German military transport and will experience the strategic importance of the rolling countryside to the south-east of Ypres. The route map is available from the Tourist Office and the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917. The route map is available at the Tourist Office for €6.00.

WALKING TRAILS

Walking trail ‘Pioneer’
The central theme of the 'Pionier walking route' is the war history in this area from a German perspective. Various aspects of the German war story feature along the route. You will learn more about the previously unseen construction work that took place in our region between 1915 and 1917 and the wartime suffering on the German side. This route is 11.7 km long and connects beautiful, unknown places in the hilly landscape to the east of Zonnebeke. The route map is available at the Tourist Office for €1.00.

CARTRAILS

Pioneer car route
Nowadays, the Westhoek forms a cross-border region with France, Wallonia and Flanders. There were no borders during the war; the Flemish Wervik and the French Wervicq-Sud were one and the same municipality. Many German ‘Pioniere’ (pioneers) or combat engineers stayed behind this German front. They were responsible for constructing and maintaining the trenches, bunkers, munition depots and field hospitals etc. Daily life in this occupied region was tough for the inhabitants. The British, Irish, Australians and New Zealanders in particular, were positioned on the western side of this front. The Pioneer car route is 75 km long and fully signposted. The accompanying brochure can be purchased from the Zonnebeke Tourist Office for €6.00.

‘THE LEGACY OF PASSCHENDAEL’

The walking map with historical information can be purchased at the Tourist Office:
Berten Pilststraat 5/A
B-8980 Zonnebeke
+32 (0)51 77 04 41
toerisme@zonnebeke.be

Hiking Trail to CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery:
5.5 miles – 8.5 km
The northern hiking trail connects Zonnebeke Chateau (starting point of the trail) with the historical battlefields near the edge of Passchendaele. The Australian presence in this area is well highlighted on information panels. The most prominent site is CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery.

Hiking Trail to Polygon Wood:
5.6 miles – 9 km
The southern hiking trail runs towards Polygon Wood and the former battlefield near Beselare. Polygon Wood plays an important role during the WWI. Along the trail there is more information about the pre-war landscape and the Australian history.
AUSTRALIAN WORLD WAR I HERITAGE IN BELGIUM

ROAD TO PASSCHENDALE
During their famous attack of 4 October 1917 on CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery, Australian troops attacked along the Ypres-Roulers railway line. In 2005-2007 the former railway was transformed into a walking and cycling path by the Municipality of Zonnebeke and the Province of West Flanders. The path was renamed ‘The Road to Passchendaele’, connecting Zonnebeke town (and the MMP1917) with CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery over a distance of three kilometres. Along the path, a series of panels is installed following the steps of the attack of 4 October 1917. The Australian Department of Veterans’ Affairs also marked the start and end positions of the attack with two small memorials bearing the famous rising sun badge.

CWGC TYNE COT CEMETERY AND VISITORS’ CENTRE
CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the world. It is the final resting place of nearly 12,000 soldiers, including 1,372 Australians of whom just 124 are known by name. Beneath the Cross of Sacrifice is the Memorial to the Missing Australian Division which captured CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery on 4 October 1917.

A Memorial to the Missing was built in an arc as the rear wall of the cemetery. Here are inscribed almost 35,000 names of British soldiers who went missing in the Ypres-Passchendaele sector after 16 August 1917. All the missing Australian soldiers are on the Menin Gate. CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery was designed by the British architect Sir Herbert Baker and is located 3 km from the centre of Zonnebeke.

In 2007 H.M. Queen Elizabeth II and the former Belgian Queen Paola inaugurated a new visitors’ centre behind the cemetery.
CWGC MENIN GATE
The CWGC Menin Gate has become what can be described as a 'national' war memorial of the British Commonwealth and was designed by the British architect Sir Reginald Blomfield. Built where one of the medieval gates of Ypres once stood, it is a site that was passed through by many of the First World War Commonwealth troops as they marched into battle to defend the Ypres Salient. The CWGC Menin Gate is a Memorial to the Missing and bears some 55,000 names of soldiers of the British Empire who went missing. As a tribute, the Last Post has been sounded at the Menin Gate virtually every night since 1928.

POLYGON WOOD AND CWGC BUTTES NEW BRITISH CEMETERY
Polygon Wood is located just over a kilometre from the centre of Zonnebeke. The woods were in German hands from 1915 to 1917 and were totally destroyed during the Battle of Passchendaele. On 26 September 1917 the 5th Australian Division threw the Germans from the woods after heavy fighting. There are two cemeteries on the site: Polygon Wood Cemetery is a small battlefield cemetery, mainly with the graves of Australians who fell in the winter of 1917-1918. CWGC Buttes New British Cemetery is a post-war concentration cemetery with the graves of over 2,000 soldiers brought in from the surrounding battlefields. 1,600 graves are unknown, including those of many Australians from the 1917 fighting. On the top of the Butte, now stands an impressive memorial to the 5th Australian Division.

HILL 60
Hill 60 lies within the village of Zillebeke at the junction of the main Passchendaele and Messines Ridge. It is a major British war site with an Australian link. Here, in 1917, the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company, from the New South Wales area, helped to build deep tunnels for a large-scale mining offensive. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is taking care of Hill 60 and is more or less left as it was in 1919. It holds the remains of countless casualties, both German and Allied. A memorial was also built here for the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company.

CWGC TORONTO AVENUE CEMETERY
CWGC Toronto Avenue Cemetery is located in the woods of Ploegsteert (Comines-Warneton). Access is only possible via a track in the woods to which motor vehicles are not allowed. It is named to one of the paths in Ploegsteert Wood. The cemetery is designed by G.H. Goldsmith. The cemetery contains 78 graves of officers and men of the 9th Brigade (3rd Australian Division) who died in the Battle of Messines between 7 and 10 June 1917.

PLUGSTREET 14-18 EXPERIENCE
Plugstreet 14-18 is a new interpretive centre telling the story of the soldiers and civilians who lived and fought in the Commines-Warneton area in the south of Belgium. The Centre is located in Ploegsteert Wood, which is also home to the CWGC Toronto Avenue Cemetery, the only all-Australian cemetery in Belgium where 78 Australians are buried. The Australian government contributed over $370,000 and more than 550 images to the Centre to tell Australia’s stories, from the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company and the Battle of Messines in 1917, to the Australian soldiers’ endurance of the bitter winter that followed.
The Australian Memorial Park in Fromelles is located on the German defensive line which was attacked on 19 and 20 July 1916 by the Australian forces during the Battle of Fromelles. The attack on 19 and 20 July was the first attack by the Australian forces in France during the First World War. In the centre of the Memorial Park there is a sculpture by Peter Corlett (Melbourne): ‘Cobbers’ Sculpture dedicated to the men who fought during the battle. The figure carrying his comrade is based on the Australian Sergeant, later Second Lieutenant, Simon Fraser. In the Park there are some German concrete bunkers and a bronze Memorial Plaque by Dr. Ross Bastiaan at sites of action where Australian Forces have been involved.

The CWGC V.C. Corner is a unique Australian cemetery on the Western Front and contains the graves of 410 Australian soldiers. They were killed during the Battle of Fromelles in July 1916. The individual graves are not marked because none of the bodies could be identified, so they record the names of all the Australian soldiers who were killed in the battle on a memorial. Many of those originally listed on the memorial were subsequently identified and re-interred at CWGC Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Cemetery.

**POZIÈRES**

The 1st Australian Division Memorial at Pozières commemorates the officers, the non-commissioned officers and men of the 1st Australian Division who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War in 1916, 1917 and 1918. The Battle of Pozières Ridge took place from 3 to 16 June 1916. At the 1st Australian Division Memorial there are information panels about Private John Leak, VC and Lieutenant Arthur Seaforth Blackburn, VC, CMG, CBE, ED. From the viewing platform you have a magnificent view across the battlefields of the Somme.

**BULLECOURT**

The bronze Bullecourt ‘digger’ is looking out from the Australian Memorial Park over the fields of Bullecourt. The memorial recalls the thousands of Australians who fought here in April and May 1917 in the first and second battles of Bullecourt. They captured Germans, trenches which formed a small section of the formidable ‘Hindenburg Line’. During the first battle, on 11 April 1917, the diggers were driven from positions they had gained near the memorial at a cost of 3,000 casualties. The second battle, on the same place between 3 and 16 May, resulted in 7,000 Australian casualties. This time the Germans lost the area and the village and fell back to a new front line.

On ANZAC Day 1992, the Australian Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Ben Humphreys, opened the Memorial Park in the middle of which was a large cairn. The Office of Australian War Graves commissioned Melbourne sculptor Peter Corlett, to produce a work that reflected the character of the Australians soldiers who had fought at Bullecourt in 1917 and that would remain relevant into the future. Peter Corlett soon discovered a deep personal connection. Before undertaking the commission he had not been aware that his father, Private Kenneth Corlett, had actually fought at Bullecourt.
MONT ST QUENTIN (PÉRONNE)
The Second Australian Division Memorial is located on the Mont St Quentin, a strategic point to the German defence of the Somme. Between 31 August and 2 September 1918, Australia’s Second Division attacked and captured Mont St Quentin. During the battle Sergeant Albert Lowerson, 21st Battalion, was awarded the Victoria Cross.

LE HAMEL
The Australian Corps Memorial Park is located in Le Hamel, to the south of the River Somme. The park commemorates over 100,000 Australians who served with the Australian Corps in France during 1914-1918. The Memorial is situated on the site of the final objective of the Battle of Hamel (4 July 1918). This memorial is constructed as three blocks of curved granite set in a semi-circle. On the memorial, an information panel gives information about the two VC winners: Private Henry (Harry) Dalziel and Lance Corporal Thomas (Jack) Axford, MM and corporal Thomas Pope (US Medal of Honour). Remains of a trench section are incorporated in the memorial site.

VILLERS-BRETONNEUX
The Villers-Bretonneux Memorial is an Australian National Memorial that commemorates all of the Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium from 1916 to 1918 during the First World War. The Australian officers and men named on this memorial were killed and reported missing from the Battle of the Somme in 1916, the Battle of Arras in 1917, the German advance in the spring of 1918 to the Battle of Beaurevoir in the final Allied Advance to Victory of 1918. The Memorial and the cemetery were designed by Sir Edwyn Lutyens. The centre of the Memorial is a tower. Inside the tower a stone stairway leads up to the top of the tower and to a viewing platform. There is a Roman style portico at the northern and southern end of the memorial wall, commemorating the names of the missing.
AUSTRALIAN CEREMONIES AND EVENTS

ANZAC Day
CWGC Buttes New British Cemetery, Zonnebeke, 6 a.m.
25 April

ANZAC Day pays tribute to all of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought during WWI. ANZAC Day commemorations begin in Zonnebeke, bright and early at 6 a.m. with the traditional Dawn Service at CWGC Buttes New British Cemetery, at Polygon Wood. Many soldiers from Australia and New Zealand were laid to rest here. The ceremony is followed by a breakfast in ‘OC ‘t Zonnerad'; reservations for breakfast (€5) can be made via www.passchendaele.be/tickets.

Exhibition ‘1917, Total War in Flanders - Passchendaele, landscape at war’
Villa Zonnedaele, Zonnebeke
3 June – 15 November

The main focus of the exhibition concentrates on the crucial role of the destroyed landscape during the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. Both armies were forced to adapt their tactics and equipment. The impact on the servicemen, both physically and emotionally, was also enormous.

Entrance:
Free of charge, if visiting the MMP.

Opening hours:
Open daily from 10.30h to 17.30h.

Australian ceremony of remembrance
CWGC Buttes New British Cemetery, Zonnebeke
26 September

This peaceful Australian ceremony will be held at CWGC Buttes New British Cemetery, in Polygon Wood. This cemetery is the last resting place of more than 500 Australians, half of which have never been identified. Many of them were part of the 5th Australian Division. The current cemetery was the place where exactly 100 years ago, the 5th Australian Division conquered Polygon Wood after a fierce battle.

Tag for Remembrance Project
Memorial Museum Passchendaele1917 Visitors' Centre CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery
1 July – 10 November

Leave your personal message of peace at the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, the Visitors’ Centre at CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery or online via www.passchendaele2017.org between 1 July and 10 November. A selection of these messages will be engraved on identity tags. These tags will be processed into a permanent artwork that will be displayed at the Passchendaele Memorial Park in Zonnebeke.

Info commemoration program 2017
www.passchendaele2017.org
14-18@passchendaele.be
Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917
Berten Pilstraat 5A B-8980 Zonnebeke
T 0032 (0)51 77 04 41
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Open daily from 09:00h to 18:00h.
Last entry 16:30h.
Annually closed from 16 December to 31 January.