

# WWI BATTLEFIELDS

Destination guide



#BeThatTeacher



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# An introduction to the WWI Battlefields

In terms of battles of the First World War, or even of all time, the Somme and Ypres are regarded as amongst 2 of the most important and also most bloody. In the 21st century it is almost impossible to imagine the scale of the slaughter, with millions of lives lost in these 2 battles alone.

**"it is almost impossible to imagine the scale of the slaughter"**

The attritional nature of this type of warfare is quickly realised on a school tour, once a visit to a cemetery is followed by another, or you read the names of the 72,000 men with no known grave on the sides of the Thiepval Memorial.

The significance of these battles will be further understood with visits to the battle sites themselves. Passchendaele is particularly moving, In Flanders Field Museum offers a huge volume of detail and attending the Last Post at the Menin Gate will give students a real sense of why remembrance is so important.

All visits are covered by our externally verified Safety Management System and are pre-paid when applicable. Prices and opening times are accurate as of May 2018 and are subject to change and availability. Booking fees may apply to services provided by Voyager School Travel when paid on site.

For the most accurate prices bespoke to your group size and travel date, please contact a Voyager School Travel tour coordinator at [schools@voyagerschooltravel.com](mailto:schools@voyagerschooltravel.com)





## The Menin Gate Memorial and Last Post

Ypres was the location of 5 major battles of the First World War and the town was completely destroyed as a result. The loss of life was truly horrendous with in excess of 1.3 million casualties. The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing bears the names of 54,389 officers and men from the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Forces who perished in the conflict and have no known grave.

Every night at 8.00pm the Last Post Ceremony takes place, a very moving tribute and tradition that is a must for your group on a history tour. You may take part in the ceremony if you wish, a maximum of 3 pupils dressed in school uniform can go lay a wreath.

[toerisme-ieper.be/en](http://toerisme-ieper.be/en)

## Essex Farm Cemetery and Dressing Station

The Essex Farm Cemetery was a medical station and cemetery located near where Lt. Col. J. McCrae wrote his famous poem, 'In Flanders Fields'. There are 1,200 WW I servicemen buried or commemorated and of these burials, 103 remain unidentified. It's an excellent way to visually demonstrate the extent of the tragedy to your pupils.

[cwgc.org](http://cwgc.org)

## Yorkshire Trench and Dug Out

The Kremlin is the political centre of Russia with its Recently discovered during the building of an industrial estate, the Yorkshire Trench and Dug-Out is now a memorial site featuring a reconstruction of the Yorkshire Trench, as it was during World War I.

## Talbot House

Poperinghe, situated a few kilometres behind enemy lines, was transformed from a quiet town to a 24-hour metropolis, with 250,000 men billeted in the area in 1917. Set up by Chaplain Philip Clayton

as an "Every Man's Club" for soldiers seeking an alternative to the "debauched" recreational life of the town, Talbot House provided tea, cake and comfort for the Tommy for three years.

Although unsuitable for large groups, Talbot House is a great excursion for those keen to hear the stories of how "Tubby" Clayton provided a home from home for hundreds of thousands, where they found humanity, rest and peace.

[talbothouse.be](http://talbothouse.be)

Price	Group rate £15pp
Opening times	Tues - Sun: 10:00 - 17:30 Monday reservations available

## Hill 60

Hill 60 became a strategically significant area of high ground that was captured by the Germans on 10 December 1914, from the French army. One of the unique elements of the fighting at Hill 60 was the intense level of underground combat staged by the engineers and tunnellers on both sides.

In the first operation of its kind by the British, the Corps of Royal Engineers specialist tunnelling companies laid six mines by 10th April 1915. These mines were filled with around 4.5 kg of explosives, which exploded and ripped the heart out of the hill in 10 seconds. It flung debris 300 feet into the air and scattered it a further 300 yards in all directions. You will find a small museum, from which you can find out more about the events at Hill 60.

## In Flanders Field Museum

The In Flanders Fields Museum offers an insightful, in-depth and complex approach to the events of World War I. Its exhibits show visitors 4 different ways of looking at World War I's historical details including a personal account, a chronological and thematic breakdown, a more pure history of the war and an artist's approach to the tragedy. It is an extremely useful introduction to the history of WW I

that makes it accessible for younger students, with original films, stories and exhibits. The museum also has its own educational facility.

An interactive poppy bracelet means that children can personalize their visit by entering their age and nationality to tailor the exhibits to their demographic. Students can also climb the belfry for views of Ypres.

[inlandersfields.be](http://inlandersfields.be)

Price	£4pp + optional extras
Opening times	1 April - 15 Nov Every day: 10:00 - 18:00 16 Nov - 31 March Tues - Sun: 10:00 - 17:00

### Sanctuary Wood Museum - Hill 62

Sanctuary Wood, where troops once took refuge, is now a private museum featuring preserved trenches and a captivating collection of photographs. (trenches may be muddy/slippery – depending on weather, advise to wear boots/trainers).

[greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/museum-sanctuary-wood.htm](http://greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/museum-sanctuary-wood.htm)

Price	Group rate £4pp
Opening times	Oct - Mar: 10:00 - 18:00 Apr - Sept: 09:30 - 19:00

### Tyne Cot Cemetery



Named after the German bunkers which reminded their captives of Tyneside cottages, Tyne Cot is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world, with 11,954 soldiers from the Commonwealth forces buried there.

### Langemark German Cemetery

At Langemark you will find a German cemetery which provides a stark contrast to Allied cemeteries; overshadowed by tall oaks, it was here that the Germans first used poisonous gas on the 22nd of April 1915. Deploring this awful atrocity, the

Allies did not take too long to employ the weapon themselves, at Loos five months later.

The new reception site next to the cemetery shows the lives of the soldiers during the first months of the war, the population on the move, the terror of the first gas attacks in April 1915 and how this cemetery was started and how it evolved.

[cemetery-langemark.htm](http://cemetery-langemark.htm)

### Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery

Not quite as big as Tyne Cot, but still the resting place of 9,901 members of the Commonwealth Forces, Lijssenthoek is a major military cemetery. Its location is not by chance, the biggest evacuation hospital in the Ypres Salient was located here.

[ww1cemeteries.com](http://ww1cemeteries.com)

Price	Free
Opening times	Every day: 09:00 - 18:00

### Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917

Passchendaele is a small village, not far from Ypres. During the British attack of 1917, there were 500,000 casualties in 100 days for a territory gain of only 5 miles. As a result, Passchendaele became an international symbol of senseless military violence and at the Memorial Museum to the memory of the battle is kept alive with images and movies, a large collection of historical artefacts and several life-like dioramas.

There is an underground dugout tunnel with communication and dressing posts, headquarters, work-posts and dormitories. This museum is an excellent way to bring home the realities of life at war for your students.

[passchendaele.be](http://passchendaele.be)

Price	Group rate £4.50pp Audio guide £2pp
Opening times	Every day: 09:00 - 18:00 Closed 16 Dec - 1 Feb

### Messines - Pool of Peace

This site also brings perspective in terms of the sheer scale of some of the events of the war. The pool of peace occupies a mine crater that is 129 metres wide and 12 metres deep. The Spanbroekmolen Mine Crater was a result of the British Army exploding 19 mines on the morning of 7th June 1917, signalling the start of the Battle of Messines. Explore the small museum in the town hall, where you will find further information about Messines and the Pool of Peace.

[rusmuseum.ru](http://rusmuseum.ru)



## Trench of Death

This monument to the First World War may well be the site that best evokes the horrors of warfare. The reconstruction of the front-line trenches recreates the feeling of dread and confinement and inhumane living conditions at the front. At some points, only 20 metres separates the German and Belgian trenches.

Price	Group rate £2pp
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## Yser Tower Museum of War, Peace and Flemish Emancipation

This recently renovated museum of War, Peace and Flemish Emancipation tells you the history of the Belgian-German confrontation in WWI through the stories of the soldiers, refugees and civilians on both sides of the front line.

[museumaandeijzer.be](http://museumaandeijzer.be)

Price	£2.50pp
Opening times	Jan - Mar / Oct - Dec Weekdays: 09:00 - 17:00 Weekends/Holidays: 10:00 - 17:00 Apr - Sept Weekdays: 09:00 - 18:00 Weekends/Holidays: 10:00 - 18:00

## Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Park

The role that Commonwealth forces played in the Great War cannot be underestimated and this memorial park is dedicated to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment who on the 1st of July 1916 at Beaumont-Hamel, undertook their first action on the Western Front. Of the 780 men who went into battle only about 110 survived unscathed, and only 68 were available for roll call the following day.

This catastrophic loss of life is remembered sensitively here, the terrain is almost the same as when the war ended and a number of statues, including the Caribou, the symbol of the regiment, can be found in the park.

Price	Free
Opening times	Apr - Sept Mon: 12:00 - 18:00 Tues - Sun: 10:00 - 18:00 Oct - Mar Mon: 11:00 - 17:00 Tues - Sun: 09:00 - 17:00

## Musée Somme 1916

This museum painstakingly recreates the conditions of trench warfare to give the visitor a real

understanding of the cramped, dark cold and wet conditions that daily life presented, let alone what it was like when the battle was raging.

[musee-somme-1916.eu](http://musee-somme-1916.eu)

Price	Self-guided tour £3.50pp + £50 for tour guide
Opening times	22 Jan - 10 Dec Every day: 09:00 - 18:00

## La Carrière Wellington

La Carrière Wellington is a museum where you can learn about the Battle of Arras in 1917. In particular, the focus is on the role of the many tunnels and quarries that helped protect allied troops from German shells and also allowed quick delivery of reinforcements to the front line.

[carrierewellington.com](http://carrierewellington.com)

Price	£4pp
Opening times	Every day: 10:00 - 12:30 / 13:30 - 18:00

## Lochnagar Crater

This huge crater was created by the detonation of a mine under the German position on 1st July 1916 and it created the then, loudest man-made sound in history.

[lochnagarcrater.org](http://lochnagarcrater.org)

## Neuve-Chapelle Indian Memorial

This memorial commemorates over 4,700 Indian soldiers and men working as labourers who died on the Western Front and who have no known grave. Neuve Chapelle was the area where the Indian Corps served in its first action on the Western Front in 1915.

## Vimy Memorial Park



As at Beaumont Hamel and Sanctuary Wood, ground in the memorial park has been left undisturbed, and there are trenches and shellholes



clearly visible in the grass. In one area, the trench outlines have been made more permanent by the addition of concrete "sandbags", and you can walk along these trenches, which are deeper than those at Beaumont Hamel or Sanctuary Wood.

The memorial contains 20 human figures. The front wall, normally mistaken for the rear, is 7.3 metres high and represents an impenetrable wall of defence. There is a group of figures at each end of the front wall, next to the base of the steps. The Breaking of the Sword is located at the southern corner of the front wall while Sympathy of the Canadians for the Helpless is located at the northern corner.

Price	Free
Opening times	Apr - Sept Mon: 12:00 - 18:00 Tues - Sun: 10:00 - 18:00 Oct - Mar Mon: 11:00 - 17:00 Tues - Sun: 09:00 - 17:00

## Pozières British Cemetery

Pozières British Cemetery is enclosed within the boundary wall incorporating the Pozières Memorial to the Missing of 1918. There are 2,758 Commonwealth servicemen buried or commemorated in this cemetery.

1,380 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 23 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. There is also one German soldier buried here.

## Thiépval Memorial

The Thiépval memorial serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial. It was designed as an arch representing the alliance of Britain and France in the Somme 1916 offensive against the German defensive Front.

The Stone of Remembrance, also known as the War Stone, is a feature of most of the British and Commonwealth military cemeteries and memorials. The Stone of Remembrance here is situated in the raised section at the heart of the Thiépval Memorial and in the centre point of the arch. The words carved on every Stone of Remembrance, "Their Name Liveth For Evermore", were suggested by Rudyard Kipling.

## Leonidas Chocolate Shop

Visit the Leonidas chocolate shop on the market square in Ypres.

"It is well known that we are famous in town for the professional service of British school parties. Our priority is to offer a warm welcome to these school groups, and to spoil the students and teachers with free tasters, animation, special offers and discounts on all the products. Our purpose is to offer the students and teachers an unforgettable experience!" - Hans & Stephanie  
[chocolatesdegroote.be](http://chocolatesdegroote.be)